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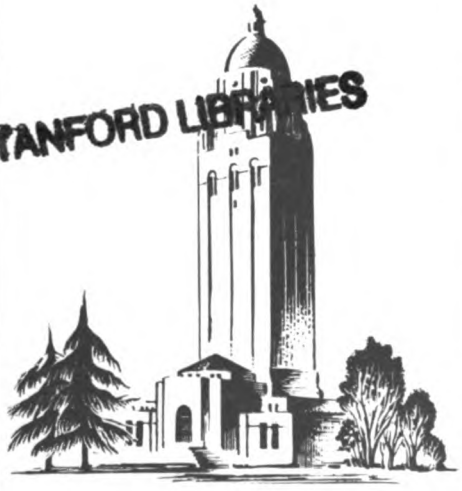

HOOVER INSTITUTION
on War, Revolution, and Peace

FOUNDED BY HERBERT HOOVER, 1919

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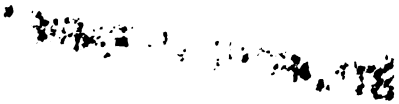

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Side-Tracks and Bridle-Paths

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BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

ON THE HEELS OF DE WET.
THE YELLOW WAR.
THE BOY GALLOPER.
A SUBALTERN OF HORSE, ETC.

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD & SONS,
EDINBURGH AND LONDON.

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Captured by the Karadaghi horsemen.

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Side-Tracks

and

Bridle-Paths

BY

LIONEL JAMES

(INTELLIGENCE OFFICER)

William Blackwood & Sons

Edinburgh and London

1909

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The majority of these sketches appeared in the pages of 'Blackwood's Magazine,' some in 'The Times,' and a few in 'The Pall Mall Gazette.' "From Julfa to Tabriz" and "Leaving Tabriz" are extracts from letters.

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PERSIA

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FROM JULFA TO TABRIZ.

THE good people of Tiflis told me that the post-road was closed between Julfa and Tabriz even before I left Russia. After two days in the train, through beautiful mountainous country and the great plain of Alexandropol full of Russian soldiers under canvas, we, that is, Mr Cohen, Nicolas—my Greek servant—and myself, arrived at Julfa about midnight. We were driven in a ramshackle phaeton to the Armenian hotel. I will not describe my room. The only way I could sleep was to spread my big waterproof sheet full size on the ground and put my bed, well dowsed in Keating's, on the top. The following morning, after eating some hard-boiled eggs, the only food obtainable, we went with our goods down to the Russian Customs. The officials passed us through without trouble to a row-boat on the river Aras. Here we were piled in, baggage and all, and finally stuck on the mud, and had to be carried pick-a-back to the shore. Then the Persian Customs! Luckily Cohen knew the Belgian in charge, and we had no trouble with our baggage, but it took us three hours to get post-horses. The Belgian

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told us gruesome stories of the road and the state of affairs in Tabriz, and at one time it seemed as if we should not be able to get the post-horses at all. We waited in the quaintest little café imaginable, just a little lean-to such as you see in the bazaars in India. They gave us *sitlich*, which is meat grilled on skewers over a charcoal fire. Our companions in the café were a Bulgarian and Armenian, whom I suspect of being revolutionaries. At last we found two phaetons, one for the baggage and Nicolas, and one for Cohen and myself.

The first day's drive was of small interest. We drove down the Russian road, which is a marvellously good piece of engineering. At our first stage we met two Persian grandees who had escaped from Tabriz. They warned us that the last stage of the road would be dangerous. We arrived at Marand, the half-way stage to Tabriz, about 9 o'clock at night, and "dossed down" in the upper storey of the post-house. We had some good mutton broth, and on a bed like a Manchurian *kwang* were quite comfortable. The following day we started early, and at midday reached Sophian, the last stage before Tabriz. Here we found a great collection of travellers, all Persians, and all afraid to go into the town because of Karadaghi horsemen on the road. By dint of something more than moral persuasion we succeeded in getting two carriages horsed and started. Immediately three other phaetons, full of Persians,

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followed, trusting to our influence to get them through. We drove past the last Russian telephone station on the road. The Russians have these stations about fifteen miles apart all along their road. The Russian employé said that, though the road had not been used yet, they had not heard that it was unsafe that day. So we started for Tabriz.

We had proceeded about five miles when a man on horseback overtook us. He had been sent after us by the Russian at the telephone station with the message that the "control" of the road had telephoned that every exit to the town was closed with horsemen, that fighting was taking place in Tabriz, and it would be impossible for any one, European or otherwise, to get into the town. Unfortunately the messenger spoke in Turkish, which is the language of this part of the world, and our coachman, hearing it, would not go on. I myself considered it advisable to go back to the telephone station and get into communication with the English Consul in Tabriz. This I did. After some delay Mr Stevens endorsed the story of the impossibility of getting in, but said if I would promise to stay at Sophian—the telephone station—until 8 o'clock the following morning he would see what could be done in the way of an escort for me.

On the following morning Stevens called me up and advised me not to come, as the road was blocked with these wild horsemen, who were quite

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irresponsible, and that he could not do more for me than send his two native cavalry sowars down to the entrance of the town to meet me. I told him that my duty lay in Tabriz, and that I must come at any cost.

You would not believe the difficulty that we had to get a carriage to come with us. At last we persuaded a man to come. He was in a state of hopeless alarm the whole time, and the nearer we got to Tabriz the more abject became his terror. He kept asking when our escort would meet us. The last village before Tabriz, about five miles out, the people tried to stop us, as they said the Karadaghis had looted the preceding cart. Then I had to use physical force to make the driver go on, and, at one moment, I quite thought that I might have to drive myself.

At last we got going, and then, as we came down the last slope into Tabriz, I saw in the distance a knot of horsemen about two miles to our left. This soon broke up into dots, and I knew we had to face them. About fifteen Karadaghis came along whipping their little ponies. Down they swept upon us, and really they looked most imposing. They ride splendidly, and they swooped down upon us *ventre-à-terre*. One man who had evidently spotted us first was a long way in front of the others, and as he came to within fifty yards he unslung his rifle from his back and fired at us. Another did

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the same. This was not so pleasant, but men on galloping horses do not shoot very straight, and we stood up in the carriage, while the coachman, paralytic with fear, climbed underneath. In a second, when it was seen that we were not going to defend ourselves, we were surrounded by about fifteen of the brigands—Rakhim Khan's horsemen, pillars of the monarchy!

Most picturesque blackguards they were. They were very rough at first, but Cohen, who behaved with great presence of mind, told them that they were taking great risks in molesting us,—that I was an Englishman, and any interference with me would reflect upon their heads. This steadied them somewhat, and they said they could not let us go, but that we must come and see their chief, who was in the hills three miles away. We refused, whereupon they became threatening again. I then said that I was not going to drive across country in my carriage, as it would be too uncomfortable. But if they would give me one of their ponies I would ride over and see their chief. It was a moment when anything but a bold front might have told against us. To this they at last agreed, and I mounted one of the little rats.

It was something of a strain when we came to the chief, because these fellows were not soldiers, they were just lawless brigands from the mountains whom the Shah had purchased to coerce the revolutionaries. Most of them had never

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heard of an Englishman, and looked upon all Europeans as Russians, whom they hate. But I put on a big front, would let none of my party approach the chief but myself, and went through all the formalities which I had learned in India. This etiquette told, for the two brigand chiefs, who were seated on a carpet and evidently received their prisoners seated, rose to meet me and invited me to join them on the carpet. Then matters were plain sailing. I produced a letter in Persian from the Persian Ambassador in Constantinople. The chiefs were too ignorant to read it, but too proud to allow that they could not do so, and after a little palavering they gave me an escort of brigands to the confines of the town. To show the class of men into whose hands the Shah had given the duty of restoring order, one of our escort said bitterly as he took us to the town, "We were fools not to have shot you without asking who you were, as I want that grey pony in your carriage badly, and it would have been mine. We shall shoot the next lot we meet in the road." And they were true to their word, for an hour later another carriage full of Persians tried to pass in behind a Russian mail escorted by Cossacks, and the poor devils were butchered on the road and the post-horses stolen. This, of course, I heard afterwards. Anyhow I was very grateful when our escort said they must go back, otherwise the revolutionaries holding the confines of the town would shoot at them.

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A great sight delighted my eyes on the Persian bridge where the Russian road runs into Tabriz. Here we found two sowars of Indian cavalry. This was the escort which the British Vice-Consul had sent to guide us to the Consulate. But our vicissitudes were not all over yet. They were fighting in this quarter of the town, and we passed through quite a fusilade before at last we saw the good old Union Jack waving over the Consulate. It had been an interesting—not to say exciting—afternoon, and I could see how relieved Mr Stevens, the Vice-Consul, was that we should have come safely through Rakhim Khan's cordon round the town.

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TABRIZ THE SALUBRIOUS.

THE first view of Tabriz is enchanting. You look down eight to ten miles of post-road upon a fertile valley that reminds you of Damascus. Damascus with the grandeur of its sentinel rocks somewhat curtailed. Yet the general view is not dissimilar. An amphitheatre of bare brown hills, with a green-shaded city nestling oasis-like in its arena. The first view is as a page from the 'Arabian Nights.' But proximity brings disenchantment. As you cross the narrow Persian bridge which gives ingress to the city from the north your æsthetic expectations are shattered. The broad open road is lost in a narrow alley. Bleak mud-walls enclose you on every side. Your only landscape is baked-brick and blue sky, with an occasional poplar rearing its tapering head above the lofty partitions. If it were not for this occasional patch of green one might have been back in old Omdurman, as it was at the time of our occupation. Nor does acquaintance immediately bring relief; as the carriage lumbers on over the vicious cobbles you only seem to become more hopelessly entangled in a maze of

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meaningless alleys. Then you plunge into what appears to be a long tunnel. As the sight becomes more used to the darkness you realise that you have reached the far-famed Tabriz bazaars—the most noted in all Persia. The first view, however, is not encouraging. The bazaars are all enclosed with the domed roofing which is a feature of Persian architecture. Indifferently lighted and redolent of the waste of perishable merchandise, they are dingy and offensive thoroughfares. The shops are the merest cupboards in the walls, and upon first acquaintance are as unattractive as the streets themselves. But the crowd that throngs this unsavoury thoroughfare is interesting. It is only in Central Asia that such a cosmopolitan medley can be gathered. Long-coated Persians wander listlessly from shop to shop. Untamed Kurds and Kharadaghis with greasy curls and baggy trousers insolently bar your way. Industrious Chaldeans glance nervously up at you from their labours—to them, in the midst of militant Moslemism, their faith is a cross the like of which no Christian in the West is called upon to bear. Unwashed Armenians, who ape European habits and vestments as if in protest against the iron heel of race superiority which Mohammedan Persia drives into their backs; shock-bearded peasants, who block the thoroughfare with their endless droves of donkeys; veiled women, all dressed alike in inscrutable visor and striped cloak, shuffled past

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with loose iron-shod heels clattering against the cobbles; here a Caucasian Cossack from the Russian Consular guard; there a Pathan sowar from the British Consul's escort, his lance-like figure and well-groomed uniform at once a wonder and a lesson to the degenerate Persians round him; hawkers of all descriptions, selling fruits and smallwares, even to typhoid-impregnated ice-cream; beggars and mendicants innumerable crowd the busy street.

What is this? The crowd parts, and five or six stalwart ruffians, tight-laced in cartridge-belts and armed to the teeth, take the middle of the way. At the sight of them three disreputable Persians, with badges upon their high hats, immediately dive into a convenient alley. Why is this? It is simple: the ruffians in arms are revolutionists; the squirming Persians in high hats are the Shah's regulars sent to the town to restore order!

But Tabriz is not all mud walls with cheap stucco doorways. Once you can penetrate beyond the iron-barred gates in the walls you find that they enclose beautiful gardens. Social seclusion is a fetish with the Persian. It was grafted into his life's system in the Middle Ages. How many times has Tabriz, the "sanitarium for fever," been swept by the ravages of war? How many times has the blood of its young men run red above the cobbles, while its walls re-echoed to the despairing cries of its ravished maidens? It is not

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once or twice. The pillage of Tabriz is a tradition which every mother amongst the wild tribesmen of Central Asia, from Tashkend in the north to Baghdad in the south, croons over her man-child. To the written knowledge of historians it has been royally sacked nine times. In turn Shah Suja, Tamerlane, Selim, the Sultan Suleiman, Osman Pasha, Shah Abbas, Murad, the Turks of Van, and the Russians themselves, have turned it over to their licentious soldiery, while of minor raids and oppressions there is no count. Why, at this very moment, as I sit writing, the wild horsemen of the Karadagh, in the name of Mahamed Ali, the Shah, are looting the suburbs and carrying away to the hills fair Tabrizli damsels to be their handmaidens. Small wonder, therefore, that the inhabitants surround their gardens with unscalable walls, imprison their homes within low iron-studded gates, and so dress their women that the fame of their beauty may not penetrate beyond the confines of their own domain.

But within these walls there may be found some of that half-mythical, half-poetic oriental splendour which in our dreams we associate with Persia. The town has been made the water-catch of a wonderful artificial supply from the hills that surround it. There the sinking of wells and traverse-tunnels furnishes an unlimited flow of pure crystal water. The town is honeycombed with a distributing drainage, so that every house-

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hold of importance has its own supply passing through its grounds. This is responsible for the beautiful vegetation. The green of poplar, elm, acacia, walnut, peach and willow, rises above the walls, while the most beautiful flowers flourish with but the smallest assistance. The aim, too, of the Persian architect is ornamental. To us his art is crude, and perhaps his façades and brightly-illuminated frescoes do not rise above the common level of fantastic finish. But his efforts harmonise with the open straggling garden, the splashes of midsummer bloom, the stagnant pond, filigree veranda, and irregular mosaics, which form the basework for his conceptions.

But the visitor's disappointment in Tabriz is but momentary. Once the monotony of the everlasting mud walls and inconsequent alleys has ceased to weary, there is so much in this wonderful town that is beautiful, quaint and instructive, that the sympathetic will find pleasure at every corner of the narrow streets he was at first inclined to despise. The antiquity of it all appals you. To think that the first of these dirt-coloured walls was built to the order of the ailing Zubaidah, the wife of the Caliph Haroun-al-Raschid, and that in the Middle Ages the renown of Tabriz was such that Edward the First of England found it expedient to send envoys to its then ruler, Ghazan Khan. All this brings food for serious thought. Here it was

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that men were found who penetrated in conquest to the plains of India and the shores of the Mediterranean, Black, and Caspian Seas. A town whose sons were giants when our own were semi-barbarians, poorly cultured in war and almost ignorant of the arts and blessings of civilisation. Yet to-day? It is hard to suppress a smile as one lives in their midst. These sons that were very giants have proved the hares in the race of development between nations. They have slept on the track while the tortoise from the West has seized the prize!

"To-morrow, by the grace of God!" In that one sentence you have Tabriz, — nay, you have the whole of Persia.

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THE ARK.

If not the most interesting, the most prominent building in Tabriz is the Citadel. Tabriz city, with its two hundred and fifty mosques and eight gates, is oblong in the shape of its area. The Citadel stands on a mound somewhere near the centre of the oblong. It consists of a keep —a square heavy brick tower, about 100 feet high, with a gallery on the top, and walls 25 feet thick at the base—and a bastioned-banquetted wall enclosing about an acre of courtyard, through which passes one of the many watercourses. It is loopholed throughout, and has all the appearance of medieval strength. Its history, even if mainly traditional, is interesting. It was originally a mosque, and is said to have been raised by Ali Shah Jehan, the successor of the Ghazan Khan Mongol whom Edward I. favoured with his communications. At that time this mosque as a building was the largest in all Persia. But in later times its uses as a mosque died out, and it was fashioned into the Citadel of the town. It is known as "The Ark." Many traditions cling to its mouldering walls and com-

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manding keep. The first is that the bricks from which the keep was constructed were each tossed up to the masons by a powerful Ethiopian slave, who, for this great feat of strength, was immediately liberated. Nothing, however, has been handed down to commemorate the skill of the masons who must have caught these baked missiles, and whose prowess seems, if anything, to have been greater even than that of the Ethiopian. Another legend is that a youth of the city wagered that he would be able to scale the keep. The whole population assembled to see him make the attempt. Placing his back to the wall, the youth painfully worked himself up to the top by placing his fingers in the interstices between the narrow bricks.[1] As soon as the youth reached the summit his wonderful feat of daring was rewarded by instant execution, the consensus of opinion amongst his judges being that it would be against the public safety to let such an expert climber live. It would be placing a premium upon burglary! Yet one more legend concerning the keep of the Ark. As is natural in a country where sensation in public executions is much prized, the keep could not escape from service as a scaffold. It was customary to cast the unfortunate victims from its summit. On one occasion, however, a woman was pushed over the parapet, and it is credibly stated her clothes so

[1] The base of the keep is greater than the summit, so that the walls gently incline inwards.

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[illegible] the wind that she sailed slowly to the ground and alighted gracefully upon her small feet.

[illegible] years the Ark has been used as an arsenal and military store. But when, two years ago, the present Shah confirmed his father's order and conferred a form of representative government upon Persia, the local exponents of constitutional procedure immediately took armed possession of the Citadel. It has remained in their hands ever since, and for the last week any European on the south side of the edifice, if he cared to take the trouble, could from his roof have seen these Constitutionals endeavouring to make practice against the Royalists with a 15-pounder Nordenfeldt field-gun. To any one familiar with artillery practice the spectacle was entertaining. They usually succeeded in "getting off" three rounds in two hours. For five days fuze-setting defeated them entirely. After that "an expert" was somewhere dug out of the town, and as a consequence the business portion suffered considerably from "premature bursts." The only persons who seemed unhurt from this shell-fire were the Royalists. It should also be placed on record that the first round discharged by this fresh gunner was disastrous to the original layer, as it [illegible] back the trail pinned him desperately [illegible]

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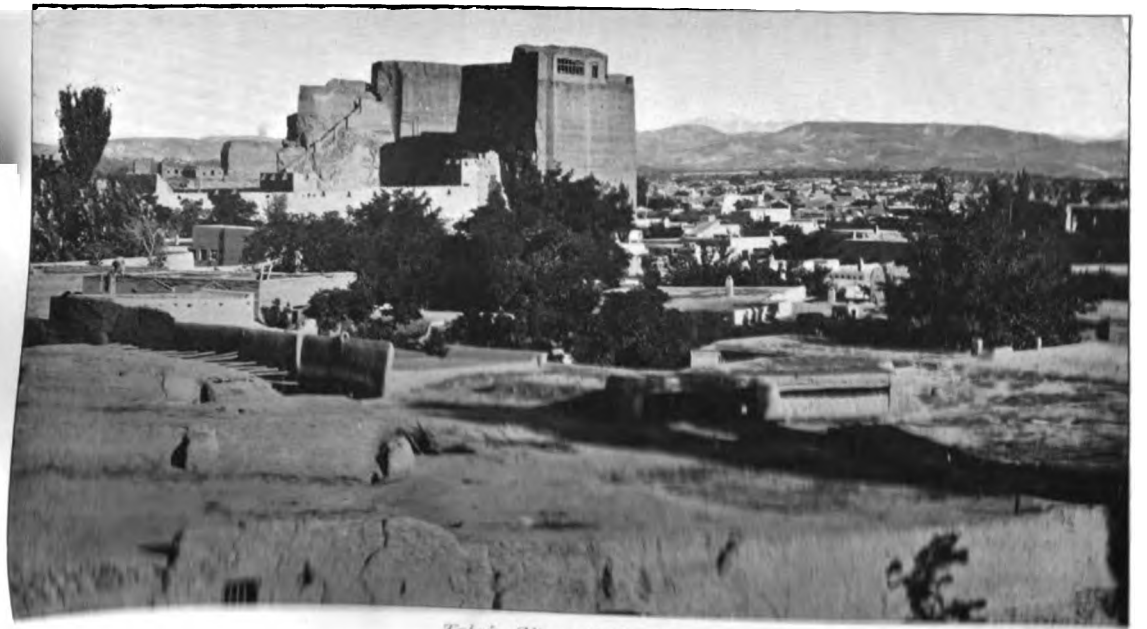

Tabriz City and the A.R.

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HASSAN ALI KHAN.

I FIRST met Hassan Ali Khan by accident. I have now to allow that this chance meeting with Hassan Ali was one of the many fortunate circumstances of my life. The Mullas had been preaching in the chief of the two hundred and fifty mosques in the city. As the mosques and the Mullas of the reactionary faction were closely invested by the revolutionary influence, it was obvious that the preaching in the chief mosque was anti-Royalist. That it was vehement I myself had been witness, though I could not do more than catch here and there a word that I could recognise. The congregation were wildly enthusiastic. They smote their breasts and called in unison upon the name of their favourite *Imam*, and then, as if seized with a single purpose, welled from under the domed roof of their house of worship. Out they came into the narrow street. The rush pushed me, the Feringhi, into the place designed for the weakest, and in order to save my bones from being crushed I sought the hospitality of a grimy coffee-shop. Here it was that I met Hassan Ali. I had nearly

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fallen into the lap of a well-dressed young Persian.

"These Persians are d——d fools—yes?"

My first impression was surprise that I should be addressed in English, a language rare in Tabriz; my next feeling was one of annoyance that this young fellow should seek my acquaintance by abuse of his fellow-countrymen. But when I looked into his face and saw the humour in the sparkle of his eyes, I forgave him his apparent want of race loyalty.

"Surely you have sympathy with them?"

"Me, no! I disgust them very much—yes?" And the twinkle in the young man's eye communicated itself to his whole face. He had a most pleasant smile.

"By which I take it that you are a Royalist, and do not believe what the Mullas have been preaching?" I said.

"Me, I am a Royalist, yes. I am a Persian, I must believe what the Mullas tell me. If I do not believe I am an infidel. I must believe what that small boy-preacher there was saying. He is not yet twelve years old, and he has never yet read a book, and preaches to them that they must have Constitution, must be free, must own no master but their own desires, and must go to Paradise and drink camel's milk and eat dates and honey for ever. Of course I must believe. For what other reason have I studied your language, customs, and manners, read your books,

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but to believe the words of that stripling who does not know that a constitution is not a thing of brick and mortar. Yes!"

"Then if you are satisfied that these preachers are right, why do you call your fellow-countrymen fools?"

The twinkle again appeared in Hassan Ali's eye as he answered, "Because I too am a Persian. These Persians are d——d fools! Yes?"

I will have more to tell you about Hassan Ali later on. I have learned more about poor priest-clogged Persia in his society than from any other source.

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A DIAGNOSIS.

THE reader will be marvelling to himself what all this stew in Tabriz is about. There are also many in Tabriz who are similarly at a loss to understand the meaning of it all. Revolution it is possible to understand. A people groaning under the weight of despotic government, feeling themselves enlightened and morally developed to take ward of their own affairs for the common weal, turn upon the despot who has oppressed them. They demand his acquiescence in their claims to voice their own destinies, or in default, his permanent retirement from their midst. Fortified by the will of the people, they are strong enough to overthrow such mercenaries as the despot may maintain to bolster up his cause. This is all plain sailing and intelligible. It is a national movement, not a local sore. But here it is quite different. Although the language of the legitimate popular movement is freely used, yet in the mouths of the ignorant teachers of this benighted people, and in the ears of the people themselves, these great truths of the enlightened West are but empty phrases and meaningless formula.

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Revolution in Persia, or rather in Tabriz, is but a local irritant which is foreign to the great causes which upset monarchies and create out of their ashes flourishing commonwealths. There is in one of the twelve quarters of Tabriz a very sacred precinct. It is known as the Islami Anjumen,[1] which, being interpreted, is the "Committee-Room of the Faith." It is this committee-room that has upset the equilibrium of Tabriz. It has come about in this wise. In the pre-Constitution days the people of Persia were fleeced in two ways. Firstly, and properly, by the representatives of the State; secondly, and improperly, by the Church. The power of the Mullas was unlimited; apart from the ordinary channels of religious despotism, all civil disputes were settled by clerical law. Against a clerical decision there was no appeal, no redress, for a man had but to argue against the finding of a Mulla to be branded as an Infidel (unbeliever) and at the signal of the priest to be stoned to death by the populace. As is only natural with ignorant and avaricious people, the chief Mullas so ordered things that the whole of the power became concentrated in their hands, and the particular quarter they inhabited became a powerful court of inquisition. Then came the attempt at representative government. Instead of vesting their representatives with a mandate to help, control and guide the existing machinery of government,

[1] Burned by the successful Nationalists in October last.

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the people leapt to the conclusion that Constitution meant release from all national obligations. In a word, they burst from despotism into anarchy. They repudiated the authority of the Shah, and encroached upon the money-making province of the chief Mullas. Then it was that the Islami Anjumen came into being. It became a Royalist committee-room based on religious teaching. It promised an inquisition of the worst kind. Having felt freedom from the thraldom of misapplied Islamism, the people are determined never to submit to the chief Mullas of Tabriz again. They have readily found a younger and smaller generation of Mullas to give religious sanction to their resolve. The selfish concentration of power exercised by the chief Mullas in the past had estranged all the lesser clerics, and the latter now readily filled the mosques with their ignorant vapourings in favour of revolutionary measures. The animosity to the Shah is personal. If a caucus could be taken of the 200,000 inhabitants of Tabriz, the recording officers would find less than a thousand whose principles were not loyal to the throne.

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THE NEMESIS OF NAIB MAHAMED.

NAIB MAHAMED KHAN was a virtuous man. His brother Naib Ali also laid claim to similar perfections. No one in the Akhrab quarter of the town ever dreamed of taking any step that affected the quarter without first consulting Naib Mahamed. There were two reasons why the people thus feared the Naib. The first was that Naib Mahamed was a very short-tempered man; and the second, that he never gave advice gratuitously, and had ten armed retainers. So no one doubted the virtue of the Naib, and Naib Ali basked in the light of his brother's good deeds.

Now the Naib was not as other men. He avoided the house-top, and he had beaten such as he suspected of sycophancy. The Naib, although he was fifty, had only married one wife. Even though she bore him no child he never favoured another. And when he returned from the great pilgrimage, he broke through all the customs which the Mullas maintained to be orthodox. That is, he abused the elders of the quarter who came out on the Mianeh Road to salute him, and he had all callers who came to ask of his health

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laid by the heels and beaten, bidding his servants to tell them that his health or ill-health was none of their business. He ruled the quarter with a rod of iron, and Naib Ali was his *ferash bashi*.[1] In the first place, the Naib controlled the water. Now everybody knows that Tabriz draws its water-supply from artificial bore-holes in the neighbouring hills. The duct for the Akhrab quarter belonged to the Naib, so that really the people lay in the hollow of his hand. If they displeased him, there was no water. If the Mullas but hinted at unrighteousness in his actions, there was still no water. If the Naib wanted money to pay a debt, there was no water until the money was found. Then it is said that the Naib agreed with no man. If one could be found courageous enough to argue with him, the Naib would maintain that the sky was red or that Mahamed was a Babii. In his protestations he feared nor God nor man.

Thus it was, when the Shah granted a Constitution to the people of Persia, that the Naib showed displeasure at the action of those reform enthusiasts who rushed headlong into politics and established seditious debating societies throughout the town. All the quarters of Tabriz, except Akhrab, established their local assemblies. The leading greybeard of Akhrab approached Naib Mahamed Khan on the subject. The Naib was puffing at his silver-mounted hubble-bubble. He

[1] Head factotum.

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was seated, cross-legged, under one of the trees of the avenue down the main street of the quarter, and gave the greybeard curt answer—

"What does Akhrab want with an Anjuman?[1] It has water: that is sufficient!"

The hint about the water was convincing enough, and throughout all the Tabriz troubles the quarter known as Akhrab alone abstained from politics.

Sattar Khan and Baghir Khan led the people against the Government and the Mujtehid.[2] The Naib would have nothing to do with the movement. He refused support, either in men or in money, to both parties. Akhrab remained a peaceful faction, apart from the general movement. But when Rakhim Khan came to Tabriz to do the Shah's bidding, and when his brigands from the Karadagh hills began to pillage the town, the Naib put the quarter of Akhrab into a state of defence. He sent for the quarter's architect, and selected designs for loopholed gates. The architect estimated that it would cost two hundred tomans[3] to build the gates. The Naib immediately had him cast upon his belly and bastinadoed. "To think that the quarter of Akhrab, controlled by Naib Mahamed Khan, should be satisfied with such paltry gates."

Under the blows of the rod the estimate for the gates rose to a thousand tomans.[4] The

[1] Local Assembly. [2] Spiritual father—chief Mulla.
[3] £40. [4] £200.

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money was at once collected, for the water was turned off until the last *kran* had been paid, and the gates were made. It was credibly stated—outside Akhrab be it said—that the money paid to the carpenters and masons employed on this public work did not exceed 112 tomans; but then what was 1000 tomans compared with the blessings of peace.

But though there was no flaw in the Naib's hardness of heart, yet there was a weakness in his wisdom. This weakness lay in the confidence he placed in Naib Ali his brother. Naib Ali also had hardness, and he was devoid of wisdom. The quarter, during the civil war in the town, was happy enough in its armed neutrality. It was so happy that timid merchants from the other quarters took refuge in it. The Naib was glad to receive them at the small price of 30 tomans per head. But the time came when the Central Revolutionary Committee in the town began to levy a poll-tax upon the rich merchants. A fight for freedom and the people's rights costs money. The names were proscribed, and a moiety fell upon certain refugees in the Naib's quarter. Sattar Khan sent his messengers to collect the due. The messengers were brought before the Naib's brother, who called them "sons of dogs" and had them thrust out beyond the new gates. Now the average Persian merchant is a miser before he is a patriot, and the news that Naib Mahamed Khan was protecting mer-

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A group of Revolutionaries with Sattar Khan.

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chants from subscribing to the Revolutionary Committee's funds brought a horde of *patriots* into his quarter.

This called forth a further remonstrance from Sattar Khan. Naib Ali, surrounded by a batch of newly-arrived merchant refugees, cocked his *kula*,[1] and had the revolutionary messengers laid by the heels and bastinadoed.

"So much for the sons of dogs, who do not respect Naib Mahamed Khan and Naib Ali, his *ferash bashi!*"

Not content with this, Naib Ali seized an unfortunate newsboy who was selling revolutionary pamphlets on the highway. The shrieking wretch was flogged until his weak little life left his emaciated form.

"Son of a she-dog, thou, at least, shalt never be the father of dogs, as is thy master!" laughed the Naib's *ferash bashi*, as they flung the battered body into the roadway.

. . . . . .

Naib Mahamed Khan, lying on the flat mud roof of his house, turned uneasily in his sleep. There was not a breath of air. The heavy atmosphere seemed to hang upon him like a weight. The sand-flies, bred of his own water-courses, worried him. He longed for dawn, and wondered vaguely why the dogs were barking, and why the voice of the *muezzin*[2] calling the

[1] Persian cap.

[2] The Mulla calling the people to prayer before daylight.

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people to prayer was so raucous. Then a shot rang out. Naib Mahamed did not move. At this period night-firing was a common occurrence in Tabriz. There was another shot. Then a whole volley, and, what was more surprising, they were quite close. The firing was so close that Naib Mahamed, sitting up on his mattress, saw the reflection of the flashes.

What did it mean?

"Fly, fly, Naib Saheb," shouted a voice from the skylight. "They have surrounded the house, and two of the *gulams*[1] are killed."

The Naib was not slow-witted; neither was his house a blind alley. In less time than it takes to write this, he was over the parapet of his roof, and, by means of wooden projections in the wall, had reached the temporary haven of his walled orchard. But he had been unlucky, and he felt the burning sear of a bullet strike across his shoulder-blades. The hurt was not sufficient to incommode him yet. He dived into the bushes, sought the exit of the watercourse, and gained the next garden. Still following the watercourse, and creeping through the narrow arches that passed it through the walls, he reached the fifth garden from his own. Here he had time to think. The firing continued. It had aroused the whole quarter, and the general hubbub by alarmed householders drowned the quavering exhortations of the *muezzin*. The Naib

[1] Servants.

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had to decide as to which of his friends in this emergency he could trust—a difficult problem at all times to Persians, but more especially so for the chief of a quarter. In power he could count upon the whole section: fallen, he was without friends. Ali Hassan Khan, in whose garden he stood, was at least a relative. His wound was rendering him faint. He staggered on and claimed *bast*[1] from the trembling women gathered at Ali Hassan's door.

When day broke, all that remained of the Naib's rich house was smoking *débris* and blackened walls. Naib Ali, the *ferash bashi*, they had found with a loose woman in an outhouse. Both had been despatched with the brass-bound butts of Berdan rifles. Their bodies were thrown out to join those of the servants lying bruised and battered on the highway. The Caucasian avengers carried out the bodies. One was missing! Where, then, was Naib Mahamed Khan? He could not have escaped, as all the alleys were stopped. The raid, like all Sattar Khan's military measures, had been very carefully designed. Achmad Khan, Sattar Khan's lieutenant, scratched his shaven head. Then he sent for the public crier. In half an hour the streets resounded with the crier's penetrating voice.

"*Anjuman Mukadas Millin-en Hükmi der* [*By order of the most honourable public assembly of representative citizens*], *dwellers in Akhrab give ear.*

[1] Refuge.

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If there should be one so foolish or so base as to have given refuge to Naib Mahamed Khan, son-of-a-dog and grandson-of-dogs, it would be wise to declare the same: for it shall be done unto the giver of 'bast' to this son-of-a-dog as will be done to Naib Mahamed Khan himself. Take heed in the name of God and the Prophet, for there is no God but God, and Mahamed is the friend of God."

Achmad Khan knew his Persians. In half an hour Ali Hassan stood before him, and salaaming meekly, said that "Naib Mahamed Khan, son-of-a-dog, wounded and unrepentant, lies in my house. Give me time," he continued, "and I will have him thrust out from my gates!" Thus without a moment's hesitation Ali Hassan committed the crime which is anathema to all good Moslems from Stamboul to Delhi. He delivered up the blood-fugitive to whom his women-folk had granted asylum.

They thrust the Naib out into the street. Weak from the loss of blood, he could not stand. As they dragged him out into the fair-way, he pleaded for his life, and promised to fight for the Constitution. But the Caucasians spat in his face, and beat the life out of him with the butts of their rifles and with stones.

And from this time forward Sattar Khan collected the "sinews of war" from Akhrab quarter, and drew 300 fresh riflemen to join the rebel camp.

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Sattar Khan.

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THE STORY OF THE EXPERT ARTILLERIST.

THIS is the story of a shameful thing. But there are many things that are called shameful in the West which are but recognised custom in the East.

Now the young men of leisure in Tabriz, if they could write, immortalised the beauties of Rhubaba in verse. They wrote odes to every feature and limb of her small, plump body—from her straight raven hair that was brushed stiffly down her back to the little henna-pinked toe-nails upon her dainty feet. And it was the custom amongst them to spend their best efforts in describing the delights of her well-moulded figure. Those of the *jeunesse dorée*, however, who could not write couplets to be tucked away under Rhubaba's divan cushions extolled her beauties in the tea-shops, and were prepared to wager that she set the fashion in starched silk *trouserettes* by wearing fourteen pairs at one time.[1] With us in the West such conversation would fill the hearer with disgust at the immodesty of the

[1] Persian ladies of high degree are accounted fashionable by the number of pyjamas they can wear at one and the same time.

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speakers. It is for reasons such as this that this story is shameful. But in Persia it is nothing. It is but an incident in the day of work or pleasure.

There was no excuse for Rhubaba. No extenuating circumstances of birth and upbringing. When she had come to the house of Sharif-sa-dé as a twelve-year-old bride, the fame of her beauty could not be concealed. For three months Sharif-sa-dé was a good husband. Then he died of cholera. By Mahamedan law Rhubaba was free to make her own choice in a further venture. Hadji Ibrahim, the third Mujtehid, having heard of her beauty, took it upon himself to expound the law to her, and in consequence of his lucid teachings she gave him the three months' marriage contract that is so popular with these priests. Hadji Ibrahim, like the rest of his kind, besides being a libertine, was a hard-headed business man. He argued that Rhubaba's beauty, if he brought her home and planted her beside his life-contracted wives, would disturb the peace of his house. Therefore he took a separate house for her alone. He selected the position with care. It is the same house in which Rhubaba still reigns—not a knuckle-bone throw from the main bazaar, yet to reach it you have to pass through a network of small dark alleys. And everything came to pass as Hadji Ibrahim had designed. The Mujtehid's mosque was in the Devachi quarter, a mile away. Was

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it likely that Rhubaba, whose beauty was so far-famed, would remain unassailed when her husband's hours at the mosque were so long, and he had perforce to spend four nights a-week in his own home in Khïban? But the Mujtehid showed no animus. He told Rhubaba that it was impossible for him to carry the shame of her peccadillos into his own home, and suggested that she should pay him a rent for the house. The rent was high, but the way was easy and comfortable, and Rhubaba assented. Thus it was that Rhubaba, the peerless, became the leader of a certain feminine fashion in Tabriz.

I had not known Hassan Ali more than a week when he told me about Rhubaba. He told me in an offhand manner, as if the fair courtezan was nothing to him. I had been asking him something about Persian women and their type of beauty. Then seeing I was interested, he said quickly, "Will you see her, yes?" I said that I had no particular wish to know his disreputable acquaintances.

Hassan Ali turned up the palm of his hand, which is the extremest evidence of impatience that it is possible to drag from him.

"How little you understand us Persians. You should see Rhubaba. Besides being the most beautiful, she is the most important personage in Tabriz at the present moment, Sattar Khan and the Russian Consul-General included. Yes!"

I tried to explain that to visit her ladyship

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did not synchronise with our English view of the fitness of things.

Again he made the hurried gesture with his palm.

"Is not the whole history of your Europe wound upon the pink fingers of courtezans? Yes! Remember that in the eyes of all good Mahamedans as am I and Rhubaba, you are unclean, and therefore a thing to disgust. Come, therefore, with me and see the most beautiful woman in all Persia!"

. . . . . .

The human estimate of feminine beauty is comparative. If I may be taken as a connoisseur of feminine beauty, I must allow that I was disappointed in the peerless Rhubaba. However, I would not have had Hassan Ali know this for worlds. But I am anticipating. We sauntered down the Rasta Kucha (straight road) as if we had no object but to kill time. The bazaar, that should have been so palpitating with life, bore the aspect of a deserted tunnel. Nine-tenths of the shops were boarded up, and where at the corners we should have found hucksters, were now groups of armed men, looking very fierce in their leather cartridge-holding waistcoats. The only familiar sound from which we could not escape was the "Huk, huk"[1] of the beggars. As we came to our turning Hassan Ali appeased the wretches with a handful of nickel, and we

[1] Huk=right (*i.e.*, right to live).

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slipped into what appeared to be a blind alley reserved for the refuse of dogs. But it was not blind. A sharp turn to the right, another to the left (Hassan Ali evidently was long familiar with the way), and then we were in a larger passage. A pair of iron-studded gates faced us. Hassan Ali knocked four times. This produced a shuffling behind the gate, and the wooden bolt, innocent of grease, creaked back. Just a crack was opened, and there was some demur before even Hassan Ali's guarantee was accepted.

It was a wonderful change. From the squalid solitude of a narrow passage between mud walls we entered instantly into quite a pretty garden courtyard. The garden was a mass of unkempt scarlet geraniums. There was a tiny cascade in one corner, which, with a soft musical cadence, fed an alabaster tank. The soft sound of the falling water was most soothing in the morning heat. Above the tank half a dozen poplars raised their slender heads, and their lower branches and the red tiles of the garden walk were alive with white pigeons. The tiled walk led to the double stairway to the house. If it had not been for the semi-wild arrangement of the garden, the frontage of the house would have been gaudy. As it was, the stucco, and the vivid colours of the roughly-enamelled bricks that picked out the door and windows, were in keeping with the whole enclosure. The scene in its unconventional Orientalism was delightfully restful.

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We were conducted up the stairs by the *gulam*, a little unprepossessing one-eyed man, and motioned to wait a minute in the half-verandah, half-open reception hall, which filled the major portion of the front face of the little house. The *gulam* passed into an inner room. He was gone a minute, and then summoned us to enter. You must not prepare yourself for a scene of Oriental splendour. Rhubaba's boudoir was not like a Turkish Pasha's palace. In fact, the only real splendour centred in her own well-rounded figure. The room was small, lighted by day with a tier of latticed windows, by night with a pendent cut-glass candelabra. The walls were distempered in pink and terra-cotta. The flatness of the colouring was relieved by two pictures, — the one a cheap, coloured print of the Shah, taken when he was Vali Adh at Tabriz; the other a cheap woodcut of Sattar Khan, as the Garibaldi of Persia, which had recently been on sale in the bazaars at five shaïs a copy. The floor was exquisitely carpeted with many rugs, and on two sides of the walls were low divans.

Rhubaba herself was sitting upon a quilted silk mattress, with the stem of a silver-caparisoned hookah parting her full red lips. She bowed gravely as we entered and motioned us to seats upon the most distant divan. The officious *gulam*, by lumbering in with a chair, emphasised my European gaucheness, and thereby spoiled the picture. There was another visitor. A young

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Persian was sitting on the foot of the lady's mattress.

But at present our eyes were for none other than Rhubaba the peerless. It may appear strange to you, but in all my long sojourn in Persia, so rigorous is the duty of the veil, that save for the pinched faces of the little beggar girls this was the first youthful female face that I had seen. How shall I describe it? I have already committed myself to the truism that all feminine beauty is comparative to the accepted views of the person making the estimate. In her own surroundings, this plump little lady, as she sat with one pink hand resting on the stem of her hookah, possessed a certain fascination even for the foreigner.

Her face was full and round. The natural glow of her warm skin had been slightly heightened with rouge, just as the peculiar beauty of her black curling eyelashes and heavy eyebrows had been strengthened with a suspicion of antimony. The raven hair was brushed straight down her back, and in front cut into a seductive fringe that lay in one enticing curl across her forehead. But it was in her smile that you realised the real beauty of Rhubaba. All that she possessed was concentrated in that smile. Otherwise she was a plump little woman of a very ripe complexion, but too heavy in figure to be really graceful. According to Hassan Ali, she was sumptuously dressed. To me, who had

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never before seen Persian ladies except in their outdoor attire, she was quaintly clothed. A chemisette of gauzy silk, trimmed, it seemed, with pendent jewels. A small surcoat of rich brocade, cut so as not to hide the beauties of the bejewelled vest. Wonderful trousers that stood stiffly away from the waist downwards to the knee, and then encircled the leg tightly in many folds. Add to this, neat little white cashmere socks, and a cross-legged pose that would have been unwomanly if it had not been for the stiff breadth of the upper hose, and you have the picture of Rhubaba as I saw her. Except upon her henna-shaded fingers, and upon her vest, she wore no jewels.

I admired the deference with which Hassan Ali paid her the customary compliments of a Persian greeting. I believe Hassan Ali to be a clever humbug, but he certainly bandied compliments with Rhubaba as if she possessed his whole soul. Having exhausted his greetings, he proceeded to explain my visit. What he said I do not know, but I could see that he was discussing me by the flashes I received from Rhubaba's soft, luminous eyes. Then the conversation turned to the other visitor, and I looked at him for the first time. He was an aristocratic Persian youth, quite fair, with a finely-modelled face. He was simply dressed, but it required no costume to proclaim the fact that he was a Persian aristocrat. Presently Rhubaba invited Hassan Ali to

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join the Persian youth at the foot of her mattress. He accepted with alacrity, and took from her hand the hookah-stem as she daintily presented it. Now I knew that Hassan Ali, as a general rule, did not smoke. But he was too finished a courtier to refuse this special mark of beauty's favour. Presently I, too, was summoned to sit upon the cushion at the little lady's feet. But the honour of the pipe-stem was not extended to me. A cigarette was my lot. Then the one-eyed *gulam* brought in sherbet, a thin sweet drink in long-stemmed bottle-green glasses that might have been East Anglian ware. It was an insipid nectar. We were not, however, left long in undivided possession of Rhubaba's favour. Other visitors arrived. Men in long grey frockcoats, with waists festooned with a double tier of cartridge-belts, who clattered their rifles as they stacked them in the hall. These were rebel leaders. The sons of Mars are always privileged worshippers at the shrine of the daughters of Venus, so at a signal from Hassan Ali we rose to go. Then Rhubaba paid me the first and only individual compliment that I have ever received, or shall receive, at her hands. She picked a cigarette out of the tortoiseshell box at her side, lit it at the live coal in the hubble-bubble, and passed it to me. It was a regal little piece of coquetry, and seemed rather to impress than anger her other visitors. They all rose and bowed politely as we, also bowing, withdrew.

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"That cigarette is a reward, yes!" said Hassan Ali when we had again reached the unsavoury passages leading to the Rasta Kucha.

"A reward! What for?" I queried.

"You see, Rhubaba knows most things in Tabriz, and she knows that your sympathies are with the Nationalists. Yes! All those men who came in were Nationalist leaders, and the gift of that cigarette was to tell them that you were to be trusted. Yes!" Hassan Ali's tiny eyes were twinkling again.

"Hassan Ali," I said, "you are an incorrigible humbug. You know perfectly well that I am strictly non-partisan in this matter. I don't know what lies you have been telling to that little lady, and I am not responsible for any lying statements you may make about me."

"I am a d—d Persian, yes!" he answered with that delightful mock humility that is quite his own and is perfectly irresistible. No wonder he was a favourite with Rhubaba.

"Were those visitors all rebels, Hassan Ali?" I asked presently, as we reached the bazaar.

"Not all. Mirza Hussein, the youth who was there when we first came, is doubtful. Yes!"

"Doubtful?" I answered in surprise. "How can any one be doubtful in the heart of the revolutionary quarter?"

"The house of Rhubaba is neutral ground. Yes!"

"Neutral?"

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"Yes, neutral. Rhubaba is very clever in diplomacy. If she had been born and educated an Englishman, she would have been a Minister. England would not then have signed the Anglo-Russian Convention. Yes!"

"Hassan Ali," I said with such severity as I could command, "you villain! Why drag that ill-fated Convention into everything?"

"Because it is the cause of everything. Besides, Mirza Hussein is a Russian subject. Yes!"

"A Russian subject?"

"A naturalised Russian subject. Naturalised for commercial or other reasons, yes! If he were not, he would not walk about the bazaars as he does at present. But it is time for my food. Good-bye."

With a limp hand-shake and a pleasant smile Hassan Ali left me. He is an incorrigible rogue, but clever, as well as a delightful companion.

. . . . . .

The following morning I found Hassan Ali, all smiles, waiting for me in the Armenian tea-house that was our usual rendezvous. He met me with the following cryptic assertion—

"There is no doubt about Mirza Hussein's loyalty now! Yes!"

"Why, what do you mean, Hassan Ali?" I said, scenting some mystery.

"Why, I will soon have to go to his burial. Yes!"

"What? You don't mean that that nice young

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fellow we saw yesterday is dead!" I said in genuine horror.

"As dead as the monarchy he was foolish enough to support," answered Hassan Ali benignly. "This d—d Persia is very unhealthy climate just now. I disgust it very much. Mirza Hussein died of fever in his own house this morning. Yes!"

Later on Hassan Ali, having confidence in my discretion — a confidence based chiefly upon my small knowledge of Turkish,[1] — unfolded to me the following gruesome history. I give it in my own words, as Hassan Ali's clipped English is apt to become a little tedious if you have too much of it.

Rhubaba, after she opened her doors as a popular favourite in Tabriz, had the whole of the world of Azerbaijan at her small feet. But she was a wilful little lady, and though every monied person, from the Vali Adh to Ferakh Shah the carpet merchant, at one time or another graced her reception-room, yet she was only accessible to wealth on six days in the week. The seventh, *Jum'rat*, she kept sacred to herself and her real affections. Hence it was that the languishing young poets in their verse extolled *Jum'rat* before all other nights. It was all part of a cleverly-thought-out scheme, for it does not

[1] Turkish, not Persian, is the language of Azerbaijan, of which province Tabriz is the capital.

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follow that only those that have money have information.

No one precisely knew why Mirza Hussein became a Russian subject. It is true that he spent a year in the Russian military school at Kars, but that was no reason why he should have changed his nationality. He was the son of an ex-governor of Aderbil, who during his term of office had been suspected of being too friendly with the Russian Consul-General. However, at that period that was nothing, the Vali Adh himself was setting the tune. But when times changed and the Constitution was granted by the same Vali Adh, now become Shah, and the Anjuman was established in Tabriz, the leaders of the people became suspicious of Mirza Hussein and his Russian connection. By the ordinary machinery of the Anjuman nothing could be found against him. Then it was that Rhubaba was consulted. Mirza Hussein was a comely youth. Some friend brought him to Rhubaba's reception-room. Rhubaba accomplished the rest; for what Persian youth could withstand Rhubaba when she made the advances? Mirza Hussein was no fool. He was content to bask in Rhubaba's smiles; but he was as secretive as a stone. Rhubaba exercised all her wiles. She petted him; she banished him, while she received his rivals. But all to no avail. Mirza Hussein took all that she gave but vouchsafed no Russian information

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in return. In her moments of solitude Rhubaba bit her pink nails in her chagrin and annoyance.

Then, as the world knows, the deluge came. The Government party, Russian-backed, held Devachi; the Rebels held Khïban and Amra Khuz. Both parties had modern cannon and ammunition, and neither knew how to use them. One morning, without previous warning, the Royalists began to burst shrapnel with perfect accuracy over the Rebel barricades. How had they learned this modern art of which yesterday they were ignorant? At last the Rebels remembered that Mirza Hussein had been in the military school at Kars, that he was a Russian subject, and the son of a Royalist. Moreover, one was found who said that he had been seen in Devachi. The accusation was not brought. That is not the Persian way. But Sattar Khan, the rebel leader, sent for Mirza Hussein and asked him to set his fuzes for him. The young patrician turned up the palm of his hand and replied that he was sorry, but he did not know the fashion of shell fuzes. At Kars he had been a cavalry cadet, and they learned nothing about such things.

But the shells from Devachi still continued to burst with disconcerting accuracy. If Mirza Hussein had not been a Russian subject his life would not have been worth a minute's purchase. It was about this time that Rhubaba forgave Mirza Hussein and took him back to her bosom.

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He was glad to return, for he was fond of Rhubaba, and, besides, Rhubaba's Rebel *clientèle* were of service to him. The morning that I saw him on Rhubaba's divan was the first *Jum'rat* since he had been received back into favour. As to what happened after we left—that is to say, what happened during the night—we can only surmise. It is probable that Rhubaba is herself responsible for the crime. That when Mirza Hussein, received into her confidence, slept with his head pillowed in her lap, she, with her own pink hands, drove the thin point of the Caucasian knife through his eyeball far back into his brain.

It was before daybreak that they knocked at Mirza Hussein's father's house, and told him that his son was lying dead in the courtezan's house by the bazaar, and suggested, if the ex-Governor wished to avoid the scandal of the discovery that his son had met his death in such a place, that it behoved him to have the body removed before daylight.

Thus it was that Mirza Hussein died of a fever in his father's house, and that, by a curious coincidence, the Royalist gunners at the same time ceased to fire effective shrapnel into the Khïban barricades. As for Rhubaba, her reception-hall is neutral ground. It is always full: only you will find more Rebels than Royalists there

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IN THE SHADOW OF THE BLUE MOSQUE.

I WENT down to the Khïban quarter, ostensibly to see the Rebel barricades erected there. Really the object of my visit was the Blue Mosque. Now Lord Curzon, quoting Taxier,—because he himself never was at Tabriz, — says the Blue Mosque "is the chief work of Persian, perhaps of all Oriental, architecture." It certainly is a magnificent ruin. So magnificent that, although it has been in *débris* for generations, yet the dignity of its architecture remains. It has now been decided that the Blue Mosque was built by Shah Jehan in 1464, though some authorities maintain that it was Ghazan Khan who originally accepted the architect's designs. When it was in repair the Blue Mosque must have been a perfect example of dome construction. The 24-foot high doorway, which is still in a fair state of preservation, is a fine example of the Persian arch. The whole structure, within and without, was originally covered with glazed tiles — the blue-and-white tiles, of which the art of manufacture has long since been lost. The dado of the inner building is of huge blocks of alabaster,

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larger than anything that can now be quarried in Persia. These slabs are inscribed, in ornate arabesque caligraphy, with verses from the Koran. The delicate blending and beauty of the tile-work cannot be adequately described. Above the doorway, and all along the series of arches which once supported the great dome, the Koran is quoted in the setting of the blue tiles. The reason that such a work of art has been allowed to fall into its present state of decay is simple. It is a "Sunni" mosque, and consequently boycotted by the Tabrizlis, who for generations have been "Shiahs."

For many years this beautiful relic was the dust-heap of the town, the shelter of waifs and strays, the protection of bazaar dogs from the midday sun. But lately it was discovered that the tiles had a commercial value, and the Vali Adh[1] had gates put up, and placed the mosque in the hands of proper custodians. But at the present moment it has been put to quite an original use. The mosque stands upon a slight eminence, and the outer walls have appealed to the followers of Baghir Khan, rebel, as valuable in the scheme of defences of the Khïban quarter. So the parapet has been built up and loopholed, while a little mud flanking tower has been added to form a coign of vantage for a tiny brass cannon.

"The mosque is like Persia. Yes?"

[1] Crown Prince, who is usually named Governor of Tabriz.

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I turned to find my friend Hassan Ali, the English-speaking Persian, at my elbow. He must not, however, be confused with Hassan Ali of Akhrab. That is quite another man: Moslem nomenclature is annoyingly limited.

"How like Persia?"

"Is it not a magnificent ruin? Yes?"

Hassan Ali's small bead-like eyes twinkled, and his brown oval face puckered into his engaging smile.

"Surely not so desperate a simile as that, Hassan Ali?" I answered.

"The simile is good. Yes! I know what is in your mind. Yes? You are thinking how you are to get some of those blue tiles to take to your home. That is why you are so glad to see me. Yes? I will arrange!"

I assured him that, much as I should like a tile or two, or more for that matter, yet nothing had been farther from my mind at the moment.

"Yes, I know," answered this man of docile mien and irresistible smile. "The simile is good. Yes? Poor Persia! all you foreigners want to take 'a tile or two' away from her decaying walls. Yes? Russia, a whole arabesque fresco; Turkey, a series of tiles to make a complete text of the Koran; England, just a little southern mosaic; and Germany, late in the scramble, just one tile. Yes? When you have all finished what shall we have left of our ruins? Just the dust of the bricks! Poor Persia!"

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I suggested that he was taking rather a pessimistic view of his country's condition.

"Well," he answered, "we Persians may be fools, but we are not so blind to our own interests as some European countries! Yes?"

"By which cryptic remark you mean?"

"Why, your England! Yes!"

"England? Why, England has retired from Persian affairs!" I said, with an effort at banter.

"Hence her infirmity of sight! Yes!" And although I could see that Hassan Ali was serious, yet his eyes twinkled as if he were pitching me a jest.

"Really, Hassan Ali, it is too hot here in the street to enter into a discussion of British diplomacy. But what is wrong?"

"You, too, have the infirmity of your people. Yes! Don't you see that at the very moment when you sacrificed years of diplomacy, a generation of commercial honesty and decades of Persian hope and trust in you, Persia was a ripe pear that had grown rotten at the core. It was ready to drop into the hand that shook the tree. Russia knew, and smiled when you made the agreement. You could have shaken the tree Yes!"

"Well, we left it to another, Hassan Ali, to spoil the orchard!"

"And you are not ashamed! Do you not know how we disgust the Russian? How Azerbaijan

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that might have been English, will never be Russian? Yes?"

"But you said just now that the pear was ripe, that the tree only had to be shaken?"

"I said that you British could have shaken the tree. But not the Russians! Yes!"

"Why not the Russians, Hassan Ali?"

"They are afraid! Yes!"

"Afraid? Afraid of whom?"

"The Turk! Yes!"

"Hassan Ali, let us go home. It is too hot here to discuss the diplomacy of nations!" Yet I knew that every word he had said was true. That if it had not been for the Turk, the Cossack by this would have been in Tabriz. The Persian at least can thank Japan for this one mercy. What claim to thanks we may be entitled to is not directly apparent. England's attitude in Persia is judged by Persians much as ruined minors would judge a defaulting family lawyer!

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THE WAGES OF SIN.

BEGGING is a popular profession in Persia. Persians learn it young, and one's progress through the narrow streets of Tabriz is everlastingly incommoded by the persistent demands of infant opportunists. For some an occasional nickel and much hard language is sufficient: for others neither largesse nor abuse will suffice. With a third class it is possible to contract for peace. A two-kran piece (=fourteen pence) paid regularly once a-month will satisfy the demands upon your charity. In this latter class was Dowlati. Now I think that little Dowlati, while being the dirtiest, was certainly the prettiest child I have seen. She may have been eight or nine. Perhaps even she was ten. But in spite of the grime which encrusted her, she was perfect of face and form. Imagine a small, graceful figure inadequately shrouded in a faded blue cloth,—a cloth that was skirt, vest, and head-cover in one, and that was so tattered and patched that the fulness of a velvet skin, white as a Saxon's, showed through it everywhere. Imagine, peeping through this shift, a little oval face of perfect symmetry;

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cheeks like ripe peaches; a pair of black, lustrous eyes, shaded with inch-black lashes; a tangle of matted hair; a sweet, red mouth,—and you see Dowlati, the beggar-maid, with whom I compounded for a silver two-kran piece a-month. But my contract did not obliterate the child. I saw her daily. While she honestly refrained from pestering me, yet she looked at me so wistfully, and plied the silent graces of her sex so subtly, that I, being astonished at the natural coquetry of one so young and untamed, often fell a victim to her silent pleading.

Then for a week I missed Dowlati. All her compeers were there in the small bazaar, but there was no Dowlati. Could she have fallen a victim to some stray bullet during the street-fighting? Had her guardians, if she had any, perceived her beauty and budding womanhood, and hastily withdrawn her from the public gaze, to languish behind the thick veil that standardises a woman's virtue in Persia? None could tell me. What was one beggar-maid more or less in the streets of Tabriz?

On Sunday the third instalment of her contract pay was due. As I left my gate, there in the sun, leaning against the bright buff wall, stood Dowlati. The same smiling, unveiled, ill-clad, modest Dowlati. Where had she been? Dowlati was adventurous. Her trade suffered from over-production in the town. She had "pegged out a new claim" by the small tent

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town that had sprung up about the Royalist camp outside Tabriz. She had just come in that I might fulfil my contract. She took the rough-struck coin, beamed on me, and disappeared. Poor little atom, I was never to see her smile again.

Hassan Ali shrugged his shoulders. "There is no knowing what will happen to her out in the Shah's camp. This is Persia, and Karadagh horsemen respect not even children of tender age. But what does one beggar-maid more or less matter! It is from their ranks that we recruit all that you in the West call infamous. She is not too young; this is Persia. Yes!"

. . . . . ,

"They have caught a spy. Yes!" Hassan Ali sat down in his chair with all that awkwardness which people accustomed to sit on their heels usually exhibit in European surroundings.

"What will they do to him?"

"Spies do not live long at these times. It was one of these beggars. Yes! She was carrying messages regularly between the Royalists under protection in the Russian Consulate and the Mujtehids in Devachi. Yes!"

"Poor thing!" I mused, and gave the matter no further thought until the evening. Then I happened to pass the Maragha Gate. A crowd was collected, and two Americans with cameras had climbed an adjacent wall and were trying

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to make the most of the failing light. My *gulam*,[1] a sturdy fellow, pushed a lane for me that I might pass the Gate. What a gruesome sight met my eyes! Suspended, head downwards, from the coping of the arch was a naked female figure. A strip of old blue cloth passed about the legs, but rendered the attempt at decency indecent. I will not harrow your feelings further. As I gazed upon the distorted features I realised that Dowlati's contract with me had been terminated. Never again should I see this beautiful child shrinking shyly against the mud wall that faced my gate. A spy! So young and so beautiful, and let us hope, so innocent. But this is Persia. What does a beggar-girl more or less matter!

[1] *Gulam*, servant. In Persian towns Europeans are usually piloted through the bazaars by liveried servants.

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THE OPINIONS OF RAHMAT KHAN, DUFFADAR.

If the balance of Rahmat Khan's intelligence had been equal to his other soldierly qualities he would have been a Risaldar major at least. As it was, in spite of the fact that he had received the Order of Merit for saving the life of a British officer in the Bara valley, he was only a Lance-Duffadar, with over fifteen years' service, drawing 70 rupees a-month, in the Consular Guard at Tabriz. He did not know even why he had volunteered to come to far-off Persia for three years. It may have been in the vague hope that the land of Iran promised the fighting which was his heart's desire. Or possibly, red-blooded Pathan that he was, he had so entangled himself in village love-affairs that distance and time alone rendered existence possible. Or it may have been the handsome monthly increment that attracted him. Whatever the motive of his presence in Tabriz, this fearless swashbuckler maintained to the full both the credit of his race and the honour of the service which had trained him. He kept the consular escort just as

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smartly turned out as they would have been if there had been an adjutant or orderly officer to set the standard. He himself, when he walked abroad, played the part of the Indian gentleman of the fighting class. The fit of his frock-coat of French grey was perfect. His flowered waistcoat was as tasteful as his pink muslin *lungi*.[1] His gold watch-chain, his patent-leather shoes, and his embossed walking-stick were all in keeping with the correct fashion of his class. Is it to be wondered that even the veiled beauties of Tabriz could not resist him, a Mohammedan like unto themselves? And Rahmat Khan being a Pathan, is it to be wondered that he did not fail to encourage the admiration of the veiled beauties? Besides, Rahmat Khan knew something of the tricks and opportunities that the veil of pudicity invited.

This was Rahmat Khan's first and only trouble in Tabriz. But it was a recurring trouble, and the intervals were astonishingly short. On the first occasion which ended in discovery, the local immaculates thought themselves to inflict summary punishment. But they mistook Rahmat Khan, and he laid about him so lustily with his silver-embossed stick that outraged husband and brother had more than moral damage to deplore. On the next occasion, therefore, they steered a more subtle course. They came to the Consul-General and complained. They said that of

[1] Head-cloth.

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course if he had been an Infidel they would have killed him like a dog in the street; but being a Believer, though a Sunni and poor Believer at that, there was some virtue attaching to his *liaison*, and they, therefore, lodged a complaint. The Consul-General was furious. He upbraided the Duffadar in voluble Persian, of which Rahmat Khan understood one word in ten. In the matter of temperament there is little between the Pathan and the Irishman. Rahmat Khan took his punishment like a man. He was humble in his contrition and charming in his simple assent to the iniquities which were fastened to his name. But he took it back out of the unfortunate husband within twenty-four hours, and then naïvely told the Consul-General that any husband who could not guarantee the chastity of his wife deserved no better treatment than he had meted out in this particular instance. Which, be it said, is true, even if it be dissolute logic.

But it is not with Rahmat Khan's peccadillos that I am concerned. This I will say, judged by Pathan standards, all his faults were manly. He hailed my arrival in Tabriz with delight. I at least knew his language and his kind, and whenever he was off duty he came to pay me a visit. He was prepared to do anything for me, from cleaning my boots to cooking my dinner, if I had so desired. Nothing would have been too menial for him in the interests of a Sahib who knew

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at least what was due to a manly Indian gentleman of his type. Every British officer in the Indian Army who is worthy of his commission will know what I mean. If the Bengalis were only native gentlemen, as are the Pathans, we should rule them with silken threads, instead of with the rod of iron they have now bidden us to forge.

Rahmat Khan thirsted for information. At my request he sat on his heels in my verandah, and pretended that he liked the brew of English tea which my servant had handed to him.

"Sahib," he said, "why do we not fight with the Russians?"

"We have no reason, Duffadar!"

Rahmat Khan was silent for a minute. He was deep in thought. Then he returned to his subject.

"Sahib, in my country it is base to be thought a coward. Now, if any one was to say to me that I was afraid of any man, I would take trouble to prove him a liar!"

"How would you do that, Duffadar?"

Rahmat Khan smiled. He has a delightful smile.

"There are many ways, Sahib. I might pull his beard and spit in his face; I might steal his cattle, or"—and here the smile broadened to a grin—"I might have dalliance with his women-folk."

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"By which you mean, Duffadar, that you would push a quarrel, no matter the means!"

Rahmat Khan nodded, his eyes glistening at the bare thought of such an opportunity.

"Well, what has all this to do with Russia?" I asked.

"Sahib, it is the same thing. Ever since I was a recruit it has been said in India that the *Sirkar*[1] was afraid of the Russians. Afraid that Russia would seize India!"

"But that was but bazaar-talk. Not straight talk, Duffadar!"

Rahmat Khan shook his head.

"Sahib, we in India are not fools. We see all the railways being built to the passes: we see all the cantonments grouped round the frontiers; we read the native papers. If these preparations are not because the *Sirkar* is afraid of the Russians, then why are they made? Are the Afridis, the Pathans of Yagistan, the Afghans even, of such import? We know them. They are little people. Troublesome little people, perhaps, but nevertheless little people. The *Sirkar* does not prepare for them!"

I smiled at the man's logic, and thought of his answer to the Consul-General. How could I explain the theory of international protection by preparation to this war-dog whose ultimate conception was the rifle and the knife?

[1] Government.

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"Duffadar, we only thatch our dwelling against the rains!"

"Sahib, men thatch their houses once in ten years. They do not pile on the grass at all seasons. Talk not of thatch. The *Sirkar* is like a man that has made unto himself a very beautiful coat. But he is afraid to wear it lest he should stir the jealousies of the young bloods in the bazaar. He locks up his elegant coat in a chest. Why? Because he is timorous. People will hear of the coat, because the tailor who made it will talk; the wife that admired it will speak of it to her neighbour; the servants who folded it will boast of its magnificence. But the young bloods will not believe that it exists, and will refer to it as a myth in their ribald jests."

"But we have no need to hide the coat now, Duffadar; the Russians have been drubbed white by the Japanese."

Rahmat Khan shook his head sorrowfully.

"Sahib, that has not helped you. Do you not realise that you have lent the precious coat to another? He has paraded the bazaar in it, and chastised the jealous popinjays who would have torn it from his back. Your credit has passed to the wearer. Smaller men than the popinjays now join them in snapping their fingers in your face. If you had worn the coat there would have been no Bengali trouble in India now. Do you not see that the small people are now saying openly, 'If Abdul, who was but a dish-licker, can

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be so well-dressed with impunity, why should not we also employ the same tailor?'"

I whistled. "Is that, then, what is thought in India?"

"It is what is written to me from my home every week, Sahib!"

"But why have you brought it up against me now, Duffadar?"

"It is because since I came to Tabriz I have seen the Russian soldier, and I know!"

We were getting down to the bed-rock now.

"You don't think much of them?"

"Sahib, if the Cossack-*log* we see here at the Russian Consulate are a good sample of the Russian soldier, then you certainly were wicked not to wear your best coat yourself!"

"Are they as bad as that?"

"They are but a little better than the Persian soldiers, and, God knows, they are bad enough! What can you expect from soldiers who have but one suit of clothes, a pice a-day pay, and live in holes like animals?"

"But even then they may fight well. Even some animals fight well, Duffadar?"

Rahmat Khan's lips curled with contempt. "Fight, Sahib? Fighting is a matter of *bandobast*.[1] The animal will fight, it is true, but the Sahib that has *bandobast* will shoot him at a thousand yards. I have seen these Cossacks, on parade, in their holes of barracks, in the bazaars,

[1] Arrangement—*i.e.*, science.

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Why, the Pathan troop of my Risala would eat up a whole regiment of them. Such as these will not take India!"

"But why should they want to take India? We are friends with the Russians now."

"At what a price, Sahib! You have prostituted your *rawab*[1] in Hindustan to be friendly with these savages. Why, these contemptible Persians are more clever than the *vakils*[2] of the *Sirkar*. They do not believe in the friendship of Russians. Do you not hear what they say in the bazaars? 'How can we trust the mouth of the man whose belly is a tangle of lies?' Sahib, why doesn't the *Sirkar* take this country?" With that adroitness which is common in natives of India, Rahmat Khan, having had his say on subsidiary lines, changed to the main issue that was troubling him.

"Why should we, Duffadar? Have we not our hands full already?"

"Sahib, it is a hungry country. It only wants good food and it would be soon strong and healthy."

"How do you mean?"

"Why, Sahib, this country is better than Hindustan. The land is more fertile, the people are less truculent and more hard-working. It only wants the English *Sirkar* to bring railways, canals, justice, and military instructors, and these Persians would not know their country."

[1] *Rawab*, high character.

[2] Lit., lawyers, but means statesmen in this use.

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I shook my head sorrowfully. Even this inconsequent hot-headed soldier was wiser than the hide-bound lawyers who shape the destinies of the British Empire.

"Rahmat Khan," I said, knowing bitterly enough much more than his untutored perception could grasp, "this might have been, but the time is past."

"What, Sahib?" he said eagerly. "Is it here, too, that the fear of Russia turns the big Sahibs' heads?"

"No, Duffadar," I answered sorrowfully, and I hope truthfully, "we are not afraid of Russia; but there are not enough big Sahibs to go round,—we have in our greatness come to the end of them. Of necessity the affairs of the *Sirkar* fall into the hands of little Sahibs — sometimes very little Sahibs!"

Rahmat Khan pondered upon this for about a minute. Then he rose to his feet, and without further comment saluted and passed into the garden.

Perhaps his thoughts were not as bitter as my own.

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THE PASSING OF THE GEORGIANS.

THE Tabrizli *fedaï*[1] is a simple fellow. He draws his obsolete Berdan from store, loads himself with three or four cartridge-belts, and fights for national freedom at two krans[2] a-day. If by a little personal blackmail he can double this amount he counts himself lucky, and looks back without regret at the poor wage he earned in peaceful times as carter, bazaar porter, or assistant mechanic. Of course he can earn more—five or six krans a-day — if he joins the permanent garrison of the barricades. But as a rule he prefers to remain in the general reserve at the lesser remuneration. Barricades are apt to be dangerous places, and the old Berdan is cruel to the shoulder. Yes, it is far better that the barricades should be held by those who are fortunate enough to possess Russian Mausers! Day in and day out, he is a simple fellow. He wears no uniform but the daily garb of his race — a blue or brown frock-coat with pleated tails, baggy canvas trousers, and a little felt cap,

[1] Armed revolutionary devotee.
[2] Fourteen pence.

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All said and done, the general reserve was found to be quite useless as a fighting arm. It was all very well for ceremonial purposes, when the Royalists sent emissaries to talk of peace. Also it served well to picket the courtyards of such citizens as did not readily respond to the Nationalists' Fund Committee: there were besides escorts, guards, and night patrols to be found, and barricades to be built. But although it had its uses, it was not to be depended upon to fight. It was clearly an inquisitorial force. Sattar Khan, military dictator of the revolutionary town of Tabriz, had no mistaken idea concerning the military value of the *fedaïs* in his general reserve, and he indented heavily upon the revolutionary element in the Caucasus for his real fighting material. They knew something about the business. They had now been engaged in it for more than a generation, and in some districts there was hardly a man who had not killed his Russian sentry to possess himself of a modern military arm. Thus the strength of the Tabriz revolution lay in the Caucasian mercenaries. But though these men were expert riflemen, they knew nothing about artillery. It was artillerymen that the cause wanted. They had quite a battery of thirty-year-old Skoda breechloaders, lashings of ammunition, but not a soul who could lay a piece or set a fuze. Then it was that the Tabriz rebels opened communication with the Georgians.

It is not known to the writer what claim the

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Georgians had to be considered good artillerymen, but they were gay soldiers of fortune. They descended upon Tabriz like a whirlwind. Be it known that every Georgian claims to be a prince. Amongst them royal blood is still more common than in the veins of the Poles. Even the rebel leaders were abashed before this new reinforcement. There were six of them, and for ten days they had Tabriz at their feet. Fine fellows indeed! If fine feathers ever made a soldier, then these Georgian popinjays were veritable Rustums. They were dressed the part, from the crowns of their tall lamb's-wool hats to the silver-plated spurs on their polished butcher-boots. Four bandoliers apiece, rifle, Caucasian knife, and pistol, they paraded the town with a military fierceness that eclipsed the determined front of even the 5-kran *fedaïs*. Who shall say what heart-flutterings they caused behind the long clinging veils of the Tabrizli maidens!

The writer watched them with interest. That they were gunners there was no doubt. They immediately took command of the citadel, and set to work with energy. They would not deign to look at the old, but still serviceable, 9-centimetre breech-loading field-guns. They were gunners of another class, — complicated weapons with time-bursting shrapnel had no attractions for them; and they placed in battery half a dozen ancient muzzle-loaders and began a night bombardment of the nearest Royalist quarter. As a

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pyrotechnic display it was splendid. The writer's coign of vantage overlooked the *enceinte* of the citadel. If you can imagine the night-effulgence of six small cannon firing black powder, the dark shadowy figures of the gunners, the warning shout of the fire-lieutenant as he applied his flaring petroleum torch to the touch-holes, you will see a picture of that fortress warfare for which our great-grandfathers were famous.

But the morrow brought a shade of disappointment. A crowd of weeping women waited upon Sattar Khan. They were in dire distress. They were Nationalists to the backbone. Their husbands and grown sons were all *fedaïs* in the general reserve—why had the citadel bombarded their houses all night? Horrible disclosure: the expert gunners from the Caucasus had been rolling their round-shot into the homes of their friends!

Then the Kurds attacked the rebel barricades. Sattar Khan suggested that the Georgians should justify their fine feathers. There is a chemist in Tabriz who is cunning in the manipulation of high explosives. He fills little terra-cotta jars with these explosives, and then, in his wisdom, entrusts the jars to other hands. No; to give the Georgians the credit they deserve, they were not cowards. They took the little earthen caskets, and carried them into the forefront of the battle. Now, when the writer was a boy, there was a little nursery-rhyme which always fascinated

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him. It was a simple little doggerel, and ran as follows—

"Boy, gun:
Gun bust:
Boy dust."

This exactly describes the final exodus of the popinjay Georgians. One little Kurdish bullet hit a terra-cotta casket, and the Georgians, in all their finery, poor fellows, were "dust." Two were killed outright, and the remainder, even if they live, will be cripples for life.

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Bomb-throwing by the Georgians.

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MY COOK.

In girthing up my saddle I discovered that the brass name-plate of the maker had been removed. This may seem an innocent enough discovery. But it annoyed me. Even in Persia the six letters SOUTER have a meaning; besides, at Batum, the saddle had cost me three shillings a pound by weight to bring it through the custom-house. I turned up the off flap and found that the name-plate on that side had also disappeared. At this further discovery my annoyance rose to what the thermometers call "blood heat." You see I had had visions, when I paid three shillings per pound for it to the Russian Government, of leaving the saddle in Persia with profit to myself. English saddles have a unique value in countries innocent of railroads. English saddles without name-plates are liable to a very considerable discount. But the full blast of my choler did not produce the missing brasses.

The reader will wonder how I can make a story out of such a trivial incident. So do I. But then the paths of truth are very wonderful. I had settled myself comfortably in Tabriz. My domestic

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affairs were in the hands of my *dragoman*.[1] The latter told me that he had been successful in procuring for me the best cook in Tabriz. As my digestion supported this theory, I continued to eat my food and pay my bills without ever coming into personal contact with this *chef* whose *omelettes* and *entrées* were beyond criticism.

One day I was sitting in my favourite tea-shop with my friend Hassan Ali, discussing, as usual, England's perfidy in abandoning north Persia to Russian machinations, when a most dignified Persian entered the *auberge*. He was preceded by a small well-groomed boy carrying his dust-coat. The Persian bowed to me with great civility and passed into an inner apartment. As both man and boy bore burnished gilt crests upon their tall astrakhan hats, I took them to be public functionaries of no small importance. "Who was that, Hassan Ali?" I asked. "I do not remember having seen him before, yet evidently he recognised me!"

"That," said my friend, with his small beady eyes twinkling, "is your cook, yes!"

"My cook!" I answered in astonishment. "I took him to be at least the Governor's *ferash bashi*."[2]

"Well, he is your *ferash bashi*, which to him seems a higher degree, yes!" And Hassan Ali smiled his inimitable smile.

"But what, in the name of a good conscience, is the impertinence he wears on his hat?"

"That must be your crest. It is a badge of yours!"

[1] Interpreter. [2] Head factotum, chief of the staff.

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"On your honour, Hassan Ali, you must not make fun of me. I have given the man no crest, and I have never set eyes on him before!"

"I have seen the badge!" Hassan Ali continued. "It is undoubtedly your own. It has the motto, 'Souter'—which is doubtless the old heraldic contraction for the French word 'Souteneur'—and also the sub-title, 'By Royal Appointment,' yes!"

For a moment the reference defeated me. Then suddenly the memory of my lost saddle-plates flashed upon me. Hassan Ali was a genius in research. He and my cook between them had traced my descent from some noble family crest with the proud legend, "The King's Bully," upon its escutcheon. I forgave the theft, and showed more interest in my kitchen than heretofore.

I shall never regret this nearer acquaintance with my henchman. He is a man of genius. Of his cooking there is nothing to be said, except that it is perfect. As a boy he had been in the employ of an English official with a wife who took trouble with her servants. She had discovered the genius in the youth, and had so cultivated it that he had become famous as a cook. I only secured his services because I was a migratory master. It so happened that his real master was absent from Tabriz, and he entered my employ upon the understanding that he was the retained servant of another. The marvel about the man is that though he is totally illiterate, he has invented a hieroglyphic language of his own. I only wish

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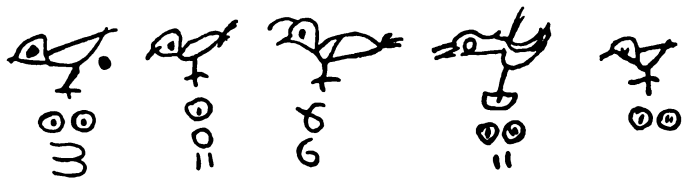
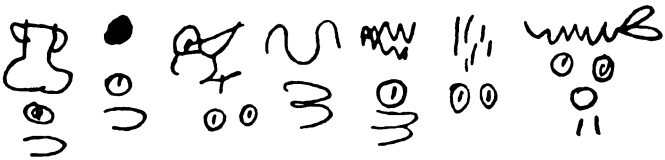
that I could have torn a page out of his "cookery book." It reads like a Coptic scroll.

But it is possible to reproduce extracts from his daily accounts. For instance, we have here a comparison in those birds which are reckoned as table delicacies.



The above read as follows: Roasting fowl, cooking fowl, pheasant, duck, pigeon. The hieroglyphics below the figures signify the price and quantity. It will be observed that the roasting fowl has a dot below the tail, that the pheasant has a plume, the duck a webbed foot, and the pigeon a hooked bill.

The marginal figure is a mountain trout, while below will be found the whole of one day's bill. It will be observed that the cook, following the Eastern custom, reads his accounts from right to left.



cream eggs pigeon milk curry rice mutton

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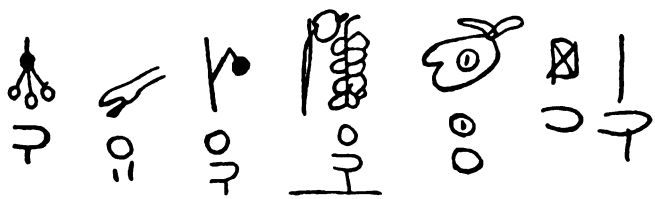
ice potato onion pepper egg-plant tomato butter French bean



turnip sheeps' trotters fruit grapes hare vanilla paper

In the above the most interesting are—"Mutton," distinguished by its two ears; "lamb" only has one ear. "Cream" is indicated by a jug, while "grapes," "fruit," "sheeps' trotters," and "French beans" are all interesting as specimens of this quaint pictorial writing.

Is it surprising that I forgave my cook the little affair of the saddle-plates!

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THE PHILOSOPHY OF HASSAN ALI.

HASSAN ALI had to maintain a modicum of decent behaviour during the fast of Ramazan. He would creep into my verandah about four in the afternoon, affecting that attitude of pained endurance which is the prettiest evidence of a good Mahamedan's abstinence during the month of fast and penance. In public none would have suspected that he ever strayed from the paths of orthodoxy. But I knew my Hassan Ali better, and would invite him into my little inner room. There we could be alone and remain closeted from that publicity which sets the standard upon the virtue of most Mahamedans. In the cupboard let into the wall were spirits, glasses, biscuits, and cigarettes. Such refreshments, though small, are very welcome if you have abstained from nourishment for some hours.

"Hassan Ali, how have you managed in previous years during Ramazan?"

Hassan Ali swallowed a gulp of whisky-and-water—it was chiefly whisky—and answered—

"You see, this year I am unfortunate in my

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house. Owing to the troubles here I have had to occupy this new house. There is no privacy. Yes! The house is small, and I have some relatives with me. It is most uncomfortable. Yes!"

"Then you don't keep Ramazan with complete strictness in your proper house?" I asked.

Hassan Ali beamed upon me from behind the tumbler. "I disgust very much all bigotry. Yes!"

"Which means?"

"That a man is master in his own house. Yes! What happens in the inner chamber only my wife and children know, and my children are yet small."

"But your good lady, is she discreet?"

Hassan Ali smiled blandly.

"I am too good a Mahamedan to speak of my wife. Yes! But although we are but poor damned Persians, and you are four-eyed[1] Englishmen, yet at the finish we are all human and all alike. How do you say in English to tame a horse. Yes, break it in. We, like you, 'break in' our wives. We have an advantage over you, we begin the process when they are quite of tender age. Now, my wife is a descendant of the Prophet—one of the two million descendants who people the earth,—and at first she was a little difficult, but once a woman is the mother

[1] Four-eyed Englishmen. In their private life Persians speak of Englishmen being four-eyed—two in front and two behind. This is a compliment to their perspicacity.

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of a child she forgives much in the father. Yes!"

"Hassan Ali," I said, as I pushed the biscuits over to him, "you are an incorrigible rogue. I suspect your good lady cried her eyes out over you at first!"

His eyes sparkled in merriment.

"I kept the best Ramazan I have ever kept the first year I was married. Yes! It does not do to break young horses in too quickly. Then you can always bargain with a woman. The bitterest moment in a woman's life is when her husband first begins to seek his pleasures outside his home. The second Ramazan found the descendant of the Prophet preparing a lunch for me to keep me at home. Yes!"

"Hassan Ali, and you can sit there and glory in your iniquity! I see what I must do, I will buy you a gramophone in Constantinople, so that you can set it upon your roof and make the world believe that you are saying your prayers throughout the night."

Hassan Ali turned up the palms of his hands in deprecation of my suggestion.

"Surely you would have me stoned to death in the streets. I am not a knave. I have to dissemble to preserve my life. Yes! It is free to us all to believe what we will, but it is not free to us poor Persians to act as we would like!"

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Then Hassan Ali turned to the attack.

"Besides, I am no worse than you are yourselves. Do you think that we do not watch you? We see that you do not conform to what you profess to believe—yes!"

"How do you mean, Hassan Ali?"

He looked up at me quickly.

"Do you believe all that the missionaries come here and tell us?"

This was a poser. But I thought to save myself by allowing that I believed in the principle. Hassan Ali was silent a moment. Then he unburdened himself.

"I have had the opportunity of observing many things even here in Tabriz. I observe, firstly, that it is the people of mild, inoffensive, and unconvincing character that come to this country to convert us from Islam. The men of character, convincing intellect, and action live here in the Consulate, or pass by as visitors when affairs of State are moving. There is no similarity between the two classes. Now you say you believe the principles these people teach. Can you say truthfully that you uphold them? To our observation you do not. We see, moreover, that you do not combine with these people. You tolerate them, it is true, but you do not cultivate them; and it seems to us that you only tolerate them with impatience. Why, you go so far as to have here in the Consulate the

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machinery for marriage without consulting the Church. What are we to think? We see the best men in the ruling nation of the world impatient with their religion, while the less active-minded use their little utmost to graft it upon us. Yes! What can we think? We must imagine that your religion is a worn-out theory, and like everything else that is worn-out in Europe, the rags will do for Persia. Poor Persia! Yes!"

Hassan Ali was still smiling, but his smile did not hide the earnestness with which he made this statement. For a moment I was completely beaten. It had never occurred to me that such a view could be taken of Christianity in the mission-field. I wondered if this argument was universal in the East, if it accounted for the small progress that our missions have made in Persia and India.

"Hassan Ali," I said, — I hope truthfully, — "you are totally and absolutely wrong. Religion with us is the best and warmest part of the coat, the lining; with you it is the cloth outside, coloured to please the eye. We in our time had to fight against all the paralysing absurdities of an external faith, just as you desire to fight now. Religion, we all agree, sets the moral code for a nation; but the moment it hampers and dwarfs the progress of a nation it has ceased to be an observance of God and

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become a dangerous instrument in the hands of men. That is what is wrong with your religion. As it was taught by the Prophet it was a great moral code. But so much has been grafted upon it by men to serve their own purposes, that it has ceased to be even a moral code, much less a service of the Almighty. We, by strenuous effort and much bloodshed, cleansed our religion of men's selfish extensions, and brought, I hope, the service of God into all our works. We judge a good man not by his protestations but by his deeds. You, I am afraid, are forced to judge him by his protestations!"

"But the question of the missionaries? We find them men of inferior intellects, inferior habit of life?"

I took up the remains of our refreshment and replaced them in the cupboard. I felt ashamed that my offer of hospitality during Ramazan had been misconstrued.

"Hassan Ali," I said, "difference in intellect is a matter of chance; but habit of life depends upon a man's circumstances. It is easily explained. The missionaries are poor. They have no use for this world's goods but to expend them in the interests of others less fortunate than themselves. With us this is a quality which but few possess and all admire!"

Hassan Ali's cynical smile showed me that he did not find conviction in my argument. He

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picked up his stick to go, and as he bowed himself out, said decisively—

"It is curious that all the red-blooded Englishmen should be in good habit of life; and the pale-blooded, missionaries. If only it were the other way, I at least might be as good a Mahamedan. Yes!"

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BELTESHAZZER.

BELTESHAZZER was born a Nestorian in Tabriz. It is doubtful if his misfortunes began with his birth. But in his early boyhood he came under the influences of the American Mission, and they effected the first transfer in his religious prejudices. The missionaries sent him to Constantinople a moderate Low-Churchman. On the banks of the Bosphorus, at the American College, he received that advanced education which has been his ruin, — new wine in old bottles sort of affair. Somewhere about his eighteenth year Belteshazzer was touched by the flame of love. A fair Levantine fillette, with a chalky complexion suggestive of Smyrna, and a wealth of red hair betraying Armenia, captured his affections. Alas, she was a Roman Catholic! Belteshazzer consulted a priest of Rome. Conversion was easy. Therefore when Belteshazzer enters this story he is a Catholic. Nestorian, Primitive Methodist, Catholic, all in five short years; obviously Belteshazzer's was a conscience that keyed itself to the main chance in life.

Now my acquaintance with Belteshazzer is

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shadowy. He was the servant of my friend the gallant little M. le Capitaine A——, of the —th Regiment of French Infantry, and late of the Chasseurs d'Afrique, gentleman and explorer. M. le Capitaine picked Belteshazzer up in Constantinople, and employed him as his dragoman. Belteshazzer was a fair specimen of that cosmopolitan genus called dragoman: the peculiar type of tout, thief, guide which the Levant breeds, and which gravitates in its many-tongued iniquity to Constantinople. He spoke Stambuli French perfectly, and punctuated his assertions by a reference to the name of his Maker (*nom de Dieu!*) with an earnestness that was more monotonous than convincing. However, he served M. le Capitaine's purpose, and he came with the gallant little officer to Persia, and by good fortune to Tabriz, his native heath.

If there was one virtue that Belteshazzer possessed, and which he was never tired of impressing upon his temporary master, it was his poverty. Before he left Constantinople he petitioned for an advance of £20 for his young wife — whether this was the original red-haired fillette we never knew, — he required clothes for his back, rubbers for his feet, and a revolver for his hip-pocket. How otherwise could one so poor be the travelling companion of a French officer?

Having reached Tabriz, it suited the whim of M. le Capitaine to visit Urumiah, the city of

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the Salt Lake, four marches from the capital of Azerbaijan. Belteshazzer tried his utmost to dissuade his intrepid little master. The roads were unsafe. Even the Russian courier had been robbed. No posts had gone for days. But M. le Capitaine was obdurate. Then said Belteshazzer, "*Nom de Dieu!* take no money with you. Leave everything you value behind you."

Off they went to Urumiah, and on the return journey Belteshazzer proved himself to be a true prophet. Five unpaid soldiers of the Shah stopped the traveller's carriage at the rifle muzzle. They relieved M. le Capitaine of his arms, camera, and small money, and they likewise possessed themselves of Belteshazzer's revolver. There was no alternative but to surrender the goods demanded. Pocket popguns, backed by the best bravado of France, are useless before a rifle in the hands of one determined man.

Satisfied with their spoil, the uniformed marauders permitted the travellers to depart in peace. As soon as they were out of earshot Belteshazzer leaned back in his seat and said—

"*Nom de Dieu!* the Persian Government will pay."

"Will pay what?" queried M. le Capitaine.

"All that we have lost, and more too. *Nom de Dieu!* the French Legation will make them pay."

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"But we have not lost much, Belteshazzer."

"Not much? *Nom de Dieu!* I have lost five hundred roubles."

"Five hundred roubles, Belteshazzer; that is not a small sum. Where had you it?" said M. le Capitaine in astonishment.

Belteshazzer indicated his breast-pocket.

"They were in notes; but it does not matter. The French Legation will squeeze the Persian Government until it pays. That is the custom in Teheran!"

But my friend the Captain was an honourable man.

"It is not the means of getting the money back that is troubling me, my good Belteshazzer. It is the fact that you had such a sum upon your person."

"*Nom de Dieu!* it was all the money I possessed in the world."

"But why did you not leave it at your home?" his master asked.

"For what purpose should I leave it at my home? My wife would squander it. She is only a child," came the ready answer.

"But it is a large sum; surely it would have been better in a bank?"

"You do not know Persian banks." Belteshazzer was incapable of understanding his master's scepticism.

"But the English Bank, or, at the worst, the Russian Bank?"

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"*Nom de Dieu!* I preferred to carry it with me."

Even the finality of tone in which this was given did not disconcert M. le Capitaine. He thought for a moment.

"Belteshazzer, how is it you had all this money? Remember the poverty you have pleaded."

"It was my all." Belteshazzer was becoming laconic.

"But the advice that you gave me about not taking valuables along the Urumiah Road?"

Belteshazzer turned at last. He affected choler:

"*Nom de Dieu!* does M. le Capitaine imagine that I am lying about the money?"

"Yes!" came the straightforward answer.

Belteshazzer threw himself back on the seat with a gesture of despair.

"Of course, if a good Catholic like myself can lie in such a matter there is nothing more to be said!"

Master and man drove to the next post-house in silence, but M. le Capitaine had been thinking. He dismissed all Belteshazzer's Catholic protestations as meaningless, but he had noticed that his dragoman kept in his baggage a small portrait of Saint Anne, and that he had showed some reverence for this *porte-bonheur*.

"Belteshazzer!"

"M. le Capitaine!"

"Would you swear that you had that five hundred roubles?"

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"*Nom de Dieu!* have I not sworn sufficiently?"

"Would you take the portrait of Saint Anne in your hand and make the affidavit?"

Belteshazzer started suddenly. Quite unconsciously his master had touched a vibrant note. In spite of the veneer of American Protestantism, in spite of the envelope of convenient Catholicism, there was more of the original Nestorian in Belteshazzer than anything else. Deep in the grain of that abridged Christianity lay the superstition attached to a broken oath which pervades all Persia.

"I will swear before the Consul, but not in ecclesiastical surroundings."

The little Captain saw the advantage he had gained.

"No, not before the Consul, Belteshazzer, but by the picture of your patron saint!"

Belteshazzer sat bolt upright in his seat, and gripped his master's arm.

"M. le Capitaine, there is in Tabriz a respected Englishman whom all men trust and revere. He shall say if I have a right to compensation by the Persian Government. I will abide by his decision!"

"Good!" said M. le Capitaine.

On the following day, after they had arrived in Tabriz, M. le Capitaine said to his dragoman, "Now, Belteshazzer, we will go to your Englishman!"

"M. le Capitaine," answered Belteshazzer, "what

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I have lost, I have lost. *Nom de Dieu!* it was my all. But I am content, we will not go further into this matter!"

"*Gentille* Lady Anne!" murmured the little Captain. "Since the Persian Government is not meeting her obligations just now, she has saved me fifteen hundred francs!"

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LEAVING TABRIZ.

On Monday night, October 5, after dinner, while we were playing bridge, I received sudden orders to return. By starting the following day at midday, not later, I could just catch the German boat from Batum on Saturday. It was a rush; we had to have our passports viséd in four places, settle accounts, get roubles for journeying in Russia, and induce the post-chaise master to agree to let us have the horses in time. Mr Stevens, like a brick, gave up his whole morning to me, and at 12.30 I sat down to lunch for the last time in Tabriz. I really felt a pang when at 2 p.m. to the minute I drove away from the Consulate with an escort of two Indian sowars, leaving that little band of Englishmen at perhaps a critical time in their history. I have been proud to be an Englishman during the past two months. When the rest of the Europeans were all very much unnerved, the Englishmen showed up so well. I cannot speak too highly of the English *employés* in the Indo-European Telegraph Company. Though their wires were cut, time after time, accidentally and intentionally, by both

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belligerents, yet in spite of bullets and threats they always managed to get their work going again. The company—no, more, the whole British Empire — owes them a great debt of gratitude. We hear of the *employés* of the Russian Bank in Tabriz being granted three months' extra pay for the dangers they have suffered in Tabriz. They have been exposed to no real danger at all; but the British telegraphists, in repairing their broken lines, have constantly been actually fired upon. And old Mr Stevens, too, the acting Consul-General, the patriarch of Tabriz, showed a front which was a pleasure to see.

But to my journey. It was most interesting, and the first hour was inclined to be exciting. The Royalist troops held the Russian bridge on the Julfa Road, where the concession *chaussée* enters the town. To cross the bridge we had to pass through the lines of the Nationalist's and then through those of the Shah's troops. It was just a toss up whether the Nationalists would let me through, as Sattar Khan had given it out that he would not permit the Europeans to leave the town. I think the Nationalists had some idea of holding them as hostages if ever their cause should be *in extremis*. Anyway, my sudden decision and the mounted sowars enabled me to pass the Nationalist lines without trouble. I found that the Royalists held the loopholed garden walls of three blocks of houses covering the bridge. The road passes for about a hun-

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dred yards parallel to one of these walls, at about thirty yards' distance. Here it is very sandy and heavy, consequently the best pace that the four horses abreast could effect was a walk. Now I do not know whether the Royalist troops took the sowars for Sattar Khan's cavalry; or whether they were actuated by sheer *ennui* at sitting behind loopholes; or whether they never thought at all. But suddenly puffs of smoke broke out from the loopholes, and rippled along the whole line. This sounds very awful, especially as we were only thirty yards away. But it must be remembered that the Shah's soldiery, then in garrison at the bridge, was the Marand Regiment, which is composed of men only introduced quite recently to their uniforms and rifles. These said rifles are ancient Berdans, which upon discharge develop a prodigious kick. Therefore the Shah's soldiers, when they fire, shut their eyes very tightly and murmur a prayer to Allah. Allah, as a consequence, takes the bullets high, and they sang over our heads like a flight of wild duck.

It was an unpleasant sensation, slowly parading past those loopholes, and watching the puffs of white smoke (black powder) as one came abreast of the apertures. Another development, however, was much more serious. This sudden burst of firing brought a quick response from the Nationalists, and their bullets hit up the sand all round us. But all's well that ends

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well, and we all crossed the bridge safely. Two things remained in my mind. The first was the stolid bravery of my driver; the second, self-congratulation that it was the Marand Regiment holding those walls. They had only relieved the Makuli Kurds two days previously. If the latter had been there and had opened on us, it would have been another story. At the bridge I met the Royalist commandant; by strange chance it was the same petty chief who had captured me three months before when I first arrived at Tabriz. He was full of apology—I expect with his tongue in his cheek—and explained that the Nationalists had opened fire first. It was not worth arguing about, so we shook hands cordially, and I thankfully shook the dust of unhappy Tabriz off my feet.

The weather was perfect, and driving in a roomy phaeton behind four strong ponies on the splendid Russian road was delightful. We arrived at Sophian at sundown. Here the sowars left me, or rather I left them, as I was going on and they were to stay the night at Sophian before returning to Tabriz. As I was the only person whom they had met in Tabriz who spoke their language and understood the *status* of men in the Silladar cavalry, they had become quite attached to me.

The drive from Sophian to Marand (twenty-four miles) was very pleasant. There was a full moon, and we had to cross a mountain pass.

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The autumn atmosphere at 5000 feet is extraordinarily attractive in Persia, and it will be long before I forget the pleasure of that down grade into the Marand plain. In spite of the foreboding of bandits we never met a soul until we reached the big village. It was 9.30 when we arrived and just beginning to be too cold. I went straight to the Persian hotel over the post-house and was given a room of which the only furniture was two splendid old carpets. I asked the host to produce food. He arrived with a circular polished iron tray on which were a glass of tea, a bowl of mutton broth with meat and beans in it, four layers of *chaupati* bread, a melon, and grapes. Fingers and my pocket-knife negotiated this meal, and I lay down on a carpet, pulled my rug over me, and slept like a log until I was awakened at 5 A.M.

A glass of tea, a mouthful of bread, and I was on the road again. Half a mile outside Marand we met our first brigands. There were two of them, and they called themselves road guards. I felt I was quite equal to two mounted men as long as they kept their rifles slung. So I just shook my long revolver clear of its case. The sight of the pistol was quite enough, and they asked me if they should ride with me to protect me. I declined the protection, and gave them each a kran (7d.) instead of the wage for the escort, and they fell back. These fellows are really only blackmailers, and they look for a

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timid quarry. Persians and Armenians they fleece even to their clothes.

We had still forty miles to Julfa. Apart from the pleasure of negotiating a rough, mountainous country, there was not much interest until we were six miles out of Julfa, when three more wild horsemen pounced upon us. They were not truculent. They stopped the carriage and asked for tobacco. I bought them off with a toman (4 shillings). I have, however, forgotten an incident. Just as we were leaving the last post station before Julfa, two little boys, who were leading a sheep, hailed the driver. They were quite open in their iniquity; they had just stolen the sheep from a sleeping shepherd whose flock was still in sight, and they offered their stolen property to the driver for three krans, saying, "If you take it with you into Julfa you will get two tomans for it, and all evidence will be gone!" I think it must be a system, for the driver immediately paid the price and bundled the sheep into the trundle of the carriage. The elder of the boys was not more than eight or nine!

The last four miles of the descent down to Julfa is quite interesting. The country falls away down to the river Aras like an inclined plane. Yet immediately beyond that river the mountains of the Caucasus raise their serried battlements. Of all the many mountains I have seen these Aras mountains are the most rugged

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and uninviting. They are simply gigantic heaps of volcanic deposit. Yet the cooling process must have been so evenly effected that the serried under features present miles and miles of symmetrical buttresses, spurs, and terraces. Great blocks of the huge buttresses look as if they had been turned out of identical pudding moulds of giant dimensions. It is a formation that I have never seen in such overawing regularity elsewhere.

Dusty little Persian Julfa. I did not stay there any longer than I could help. Just a moment to tell the operator in the telegraph office to let Tabriz know that we had arrived safely, and then I was ferried over to Russian Julfa.

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INDIA

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THE HONOUR OF DAUD KHAN.

THE last of the laggard camels from the *kafila*[1] were out of the Khyber and crawling over the plain towards Jumrud; the great shadows from the Bagiari Dhara were creeping across the white dust-driven tonga road; the pickets of Khyber Rifles from the southern end of the Pass, their day's vigil done, were climbing down from the heights to concentrate at Fort Maude, thanking God for a respite from the fierce refraction of the sun's rays which, on the summits of the Khyber's iron-stone bastions, at this season of the year, is almost unbearable.

Turning his back upon the awe-inspiring panorama of barren rock which the gut of the Pass presents, the officiating Commandant of the Khyber Rifles pressed leg to his pony's flanks and cantered along the dusty mile to Jumrud, avoiding the spirals of pungent dust hovering wearily above the trail of the belated *kafila*. He had had a long and tedious day; he was sick of the dust-laden air, and the ride down from Ali Musjid, through the sweltering heat of a breath-

[1] Caravan.

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less June afternoon, had wearied him of everything except the thought of his cooler quarters in Jumrud. Yet he had reason to congratulate himself. Since he had taken over the officiating reins in the Khyber nothing untoward had happened, which in this section of the Borderland was almost a record. The fair young Englishman prided himself that his own handling of these wild frontiersmen was responsible for the present calm. But perhaps Jemadar Ali, the grim red-bearded Soubadar-Major waiting in Jumrud for his commanding officer's return, could have told a different story,—a story of inter-tribal feuds which at the moment were more engrossing than mere raids across the frontier and sniping off trading *kafilas* in the Pass. But the Soubadar-Major was not ruminating on these matters, he was waiting for the captain sahib, to whom he had to impart information of another nature.

Presently the sahib arrived at the sloping causeway which leads up to the great brown pile of Jumrud Fort. Dismounting, he tossed his reins to the orderly who had ridden close at his heels, and turned to greet the Soubadar. The latter saluted with the dignified decorum of a well-bred native officer, and made some simple remark concerning the state of the Pass.

"Yes, Soubadar, it has been a very hot day!" and as the sun was down the youthful Commandant pushed back his brown *lungi*[1] and

[1] Head-cloth.

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mopped his brow. Dressed in *chupkan*[1] and *lungi*, and with his fair moustache powdered with the fine Khyber dust, he might almost have been taken for a native albino. He watched, with the keen eye of a cavalryman, the gait of his pony as the orderly led her away. The day had been long in the Khyber and the way hard; he looked for the signs of wear and tear in her tread. The Soubadar stood passively by, waiting such time as his superior officer should see fit to reopen the conversation. He had important information to impart, but with true oriental restraint he showed in face or attitude no trace of mental agitation.

The young Commandant turned from the scrutiny of his mare—

"A good piece of stuff that, Jemadar Ali; we'll make a fine little animal of her yet!"

"She is a good mare, Sahib: may she serve as well as you wish. I myself never have favoured that colour in horse-flesh when of that sex."

The boy looked up keenly. "Jemadar Ali, I believe you are right. See how she picks her way as if she were shod with satin. Chestnuts outrage convention in more walks in life than one. But to business, Soubadar — is there any news to-day?"

The two men were now strolling up the zigzag which leads to the keep of the Fort.

"Sahib, Sharif Khan was in Peshawar Bazaar yesterday; to-day he is in Jum!"

[1] Native frock-coat.

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The Commandant stopped dead in his tracks and turned to his Soubadar. The latter imparted this information, which so interested his senior, as phlegmatically as if he were repeating a roll-call.

"Sharif Khan has had the audacity to make his way into Peshawar — are you sure of this, Jemadar Ali? Why, it is only three days since we had news of him in the Rajgul Valley, and our informant said that he was then aware that the Government had placed 500 rupees upon his head. Are you sure that you are not mistaken? Who brings the news of his return? It is incredible that even such a desperate scallywag as Sharif should have the effrontery to reappear in Peshawar within ten days of the price being fixed for his head?"

"The Sahib must remember that there are two sides to this dog's character. While of rifle-thieves the most expert, yet he is a very *cicisbeo*, and though his nostrils are full of the smell of blood, yet they ever pine for the jasamine scent of a woman's hair! Is he not a Pathan?"

"But who gives this information?" persisted the Commandant, as he continued the ascent to the main terrace of the Fort.

"Duffadar Mirza Khan. He is a Kuki Khel, and comes from Sharif Khan's own village. He would not be mistaken in the matter of a man's identity at a thousand yards, and he claims to have had speech with the outlaw!"

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"Is the Duffadar to be trusted?" queried the Commandant.

"In so far as all matters that concern Sharif Khan. They are men of the same kidney, and I would be surprised if yesterday's meeting between the two did not take place over the lap of some woman!"

"And where does he say that Sharif is now?"

"Over there," and the Soubadar-Major waved his hand across the parapet to the north. He indicated the village of Jum, which lies at the foot of Jumrud Fort. The young Englishman glanced down at the brown medley of flat-topped houses. Even though it was evening, the village of Jum conveyed to the mind that impression of baked brick which is inseparable from every Punjab village. A burnt bush here and there, an occasional splash of whitewash, a few thin spirals of smoke, and the everlasting tawny brown of roof, wall, and outhouse.

But from this same terrace of the Jumrud pile a magnificent view presents itself. Behind you lies the Peshawar Vale, with all its memories and bloodstained history. In front, from between the black sentinel crags of the Bagiari defile, the Khyber winds its tortuous way amid a labyrinth of iron-stone hills. Although Jumrud Fort is an edifice built upon the plain, yet as you stand upon its keep you find a marvellous landscape. Far away to either hand stretch the low hills of Yagistan—scenes of blood and fighting for three

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thousand years or more. To the left lies the Kohat Pass and Jowaki country, and the entrance to the awful Bara Valley. To the right lie the foothills of the Mohmund country, the historic Shab-kadr plateau, where within the last sixty years the British have five times crossed weapons with the tribesmen. Still farther to the right rises the black peak of Malakand, a modern landmark in Indian Frontier history.

And now, as the Commandant turns southwards, away over the green irrigated pastures of the fertile Peshawar *tehsil*,[1] he can see the pillar of dust which marks the trail of the snake-like line of burdened animals which, clear of the Pass, are now toiling foot-wearily past Hari Singh Ke Burj, until lost in the shadow of the plantations which coop in Peshawar city. At the foot of Jumrud itself a portion of the most belated caravan, more leg-weary than the rest, is camping in the open. The evening stillness is broken by the gurgling complaint of the shaggy camels, as, obedient to their drivers' will, they kneel in rows, the better to surrender the heavy packs which throughout the day have galled them unmercifully.

In some measure it is a view of pathetic interest, for of a truth from the days of Alexander to the present moment may the mouth of the Khyber be called the Gate of Blood.

"And so he has sought a haven in the village

[1] Province.

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of Jum?" The Commandant of the Khyber Rifles turned from the parapet. "What makes you think he is there?"

"He told Duffadar Mirza Khan he would spend three days in Jum. Also he sent a message to your Excellency which it is not necessary to repeat."

The Commandant leaned back against the mud-plastered parapet and drummed thoughtfully with his toe to the time of the trumpet sounding "Hay up" in his lines. As the last note petered out amid the whinnying of the expectant troop horses, the Commandant braced himself against the wall and delivered himself of this prophetic judgment—

"Jemadar Ali, if Mirza Khan's story be true, then it is obvious that Sharif Khan only proposed his visit to Jum as a blind. If, however, with 500 rupees on his head and a new Lee-Enfield in his hand he will trust to the salt of his relatives in Jum, why, he will be a dead man before we start a new week."

The Soubadar-Major was dismissed. He saluted and made his way down to the lines. The Commandant went straight to his bath. As he looked out of the loophole in his dressing-room he could see the twinkling lights breaking out in the village of Jum.

It all looked so quiet and peaceful in the rapidly dying twilight, yet the Wild West of America in its worst day was never half so

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dangerous as that apparently peaceful hamlet of baked brick and plaster, situated within a pistol-shot of the British Border-line.

. . . . . .

Well might the Commandant of the Khyber "Catch-'em-alive-ohs" think that the village of Jum looked peaceful, It was only just this hour after sundown that the shooting eased off for a time. There was not a greybeard in the village, nor on that particular Border for that matter, who remembered a blood feud that had been maintained with such acrimony and pursued with such persistence as the present. It had a more definite origin than the majority of Pathan blood feuds. Each family has several feuds that have been intermittent in the sept for generations. But this one had come to a fresh head in a matter of filial affection between the two Maliks of the village. It does not matter whether the lady was beautiful or otherwise. She was the girl-wife of Roshan Khan, Malik of Jum, and she was living in Peshawar in security and sin with Ramzan Khan, son of the junior Malik of Jum and son-in-law to Roshan Khan the aforesaid aggrieved one. As a consequence, in daylight the male adherents of the Roshan Khan faction shot the male *clientèle* of the junior Malik on sight if the latter stirred from the security of their baked mud walls; and the partisans of the nefarious Ramzan, having suffered rather heavily in the early reprisals which followed hot upon

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the elopement, lay in wait from dawn to sundown for anything male that claimed the hospitality of the house of Roshan. Never could the greybeards recall a feud so bitter: men, boys, bullocks, dogs, even fowls went down under the frenzy of this lust for vengeance engendered by the vagaries of a worthless baggage still in her teens.

Daud Khan, being just beyond the prime of life, took less interest in the working out of feuds than he had done ten years previously, when single-handed he lay up for and exterminated the house of Ahmed Ali, the Malikdin Khel, killing in four hours Ahmed Ali, his four sons, and one grandson. With increasing years the blood had commenced to course more thinly through his veins; his mind turned rather to agriculture than to love and war. His interest in the present feud was rather defensive. His eye was as quick as ever it had been, and the two new notches on the stock of his trusted Martini told that his hand was still as quick as his eye. But his heart was not in the feud business as it had been; besides, he was more intimately mixed up with the origin of the present trouble than he cared to think about, as a man who had reached that stage in life when peace is more attractive than war. Daud Khan was the nephew of the Malik, Roshan Khan; also he had married the sister of the Malik's erring wife.

It was the latter fact that chiefly troubled

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Daud Khan, since his wife was adjudged a great beauty and prize on the Borderland. She had been the wife of another, had been discovered in an illicit embrace, and through her wit and beauty had survived to be the second wife of Daud Khan's choice. Such success on the Border is consistent with virtue. But the elopement of the Malik's wife, his own wife's sister, had induced the Daud Khan, of middle age, to doubt the wisdom of having allied himself to such a "virtuous" family. It irked him thus always to be on the defensive-offensive. But Daud Khan had visions of a worse state of affairs. What if his wife's "virtue" should develop still further and make the offensive imperative? In that case who would look after his twenty *bigahs*[1] of arable land?

As night fell Daud Khan busied himself with his yoke of draught oxen. It was only possible nowadays to tend the soil by night. Even this was becoming dangerous, as, about midnight, a young moon climbed over the hill-tops. With the stealth of an officer's patrol in touch with the enemy, Daud Khan sent his two yoke of oxen down into the nullah, while he covered its advance from the lip of the ravine. A couple of shots on the far side of the village told him that other nocturnal agriculturists like unto himself were in trouble. Not that this was unusual. When eventually Daud Khan arrived at his fields he sullenly

[1] Land measure, usually more than an acre.

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congratulated himself that he had made half his journey without wasting a cartridge. Daud Khan, with his rifle across his knee, settled down on the particular point of vantage which best permitted him to supervise the ploughmen as well as to scrutinise the approaches.

It wanted perhaps half an hour of midnight, when almost simultaneously the two wooden ploughs broke. Daud Khan looked at the damage, and considering that the sky had suddenly clouded, determined to dart home and find duplicates for the broken pieces, intending, in view of the approaching rain, to risk a late ploughing. Nothing human can approximate the invisibility and stealth of movement of a lithe Pathan when, wrapped in his slate-coloured cloth, he perambulates at night. Daud Khan, almost invisible, was back in his house without even disturbing the dogs. One whimpered, and then, nosing its master, curled down to sleep again. The spare parts of agricultural instruments were in a *godown*,[1] which was locked. The keys were in the inner chamber.

Like a shadow Daud Khan passed from the courtyard to the inner chamber. The *chirag*[2] flickered fitfully in its niche, its oil guttering in warning of exhaustion. Daud Khan felt for the clumsy keys of the Cashmere locks and, missing them from their accustomed place, turned to his wife's *charpoy*[3] to enlist her assistance. The five-year-old boy, son of his former wife, with

[1] Storehouse or chamber. [2] Oil lamp. [3] Bed.

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his skull-cap down well over his eyes, was lying with outstretched arms on the string-woven bed. He was almost naked, and the dingy light just reflected the shine of moisture on his brown body. Daud Khan wondered why he was sleeping in the chamber and not on the house-top or in the verandah, when suddenly he realised that his wife's *charpoy* was vacant. Nor did it appear that she had used the bed that night. Thinking that, finding the inner chamber too hot, she had crept to some secluded verandah, Daud Khan returned to the courtyard and raising his voice called to his wife. There was no answer. This seemed to Daud Khan to be strange. He had called loud enough to have waked her. He shouted out again with sufficient voice to carry to the sentries at Fort Jumrud. This time there was an answering call—a muffled, hesitating cry. It came from above, from certain caves in the sandstone heap against which Daud Khan's home was built.

The Pathan is a creature of impulse, but impulse qualified by a certain instinct; that peculiar sense which is only found in races who carry their lives in their hands. The moment Daud Khan heard his wife's voice he flung his rifle loose and, slipping out of the courtyard, glided up to the mouth of the nearest cave. He had heard something in that quavering response that had sent the blood coursing through his veins with all the fire and imagination of youth. Instinct taught him how to act.

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He was within fifteen paces of the cave, on the edge of a nullah, when a figure flitted past him. It was his wife. He let her pass. A second later another figure, a foot or more taller than the first, appeared. Just as it definitely separated from the gloom, the slip of a moon pushed out clear of the clouds. Daud Khan was in shadow. He dropped on to one knee. A moment's pause—and then the dull bark of his Martini roused a host of sleeping dogs, and quickened the vigilance of the Jumrud sentries. Daud Khan rarely missed at a thousand yards; at fifteen, in a gleam of moonlight, he was certain of his quarry. In this case, under the paralysing impact of the lead, his wife's luckless lover just reeled, swung round and dropped.

Daud Khan, with his lips twitching in his ferocity, made two steps forward to deliver, if necessary, the *coup de grâce*. To act first and think afterwards is typical of the Pathan; but in this instance a desire, not altogether unintelligible, to have last speech with the unknown spoiler of his home seized Daud Khan. The lover lay motionless. Daud Khan crouched by his side.

"Art dead, pariah?"

For answer the wounded man suddenly sat up, threw his arms round the man he had wronged, and, with a strength that seemed to the astonished Daud Khan superhuman, pressed him back to the brink of the nullah and forced him over its edge.

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The descent was not great, but by the time that Daud Khan had collected his senses and recovered his rifle, the lover had disappeared. By the pale light of the moon Daud Khan discovered his tracks.

He must have been grievously wounded, for the soil where he had lain was soft with blood, and Daud Khan's *chupkan* was drenched with the same thick fluid. But it was impossible for Daud Khan to follow up the trail. Already the village was alarmed. When feud-tension is at its height agitation is infectious, and already spasmodic shooting had broken out.

Daud Khan returned to his homestead. He found his wife sitting on the verandah, rocking her body to and fro and beating her breast in the throes of her lamentations. He asked no questions of her; taking her roughly by the shoulder he cast her into an inner *godown*, slammed the door, and shot the bolt. The "virtues" of his wife were in the ascendant.

. . . . . .

Shortly after daybreak on the following morning it was known through the length and breadth of the village of Jum that Sharif Khan, the outlaw, upon whose head, alive or dead, the White Sirkar[1] had placed the price of 500 rupees, had, shortly after midnight, crawled to the courtyard of one Jan Dad Khan. Grievously wounded in the body, he had claimed, and had been accorded,

[1] British Government.

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the asylum which no Pathan will refuse the bleeding supplicant. How and why he was wounded no man knew. For the sake of the honour of the woman he had wronged Sharif Khan's lips were sealed, and Daud Khan had not the mien of a man who would blab of his home's disgrace until a full measure of vengeance had satisfied the code of morality which rules such matters on the Border. Men spoke of the grievous nature of the outlaw's wound and, seeing there was a price upon his head, queried whether it was the act of some too zealous sentry in the Khyber Rifles. For the most part this was the accepted theory, since none connected the grim Daud Khan with the outlaw's agony. For three days and nights Sharif Khan tossed upon the *charpoy* in Jan Dad Khan's courtyard, his cries by day and his groans by night testifying to the desperate character of his hurts.

By the end of the third day the period of mutual respite from the Malik's feud had arrived.[1] Men mingled freely in the village, and for the first time for weeks the rifle was carried slung by the principals in the feud. Men spoke of Sharif Khan's case and shook their heads. It was evident that the skill of the local leeches could not save

[1] One of the many strange customs among these people is the temporary "calling off" of a blood feud for the purpose of allowing the usual economies of an agricultural life to be proceeded with. Thus men who would have shot each other at sight one day may be seen fraternising on the next. The stories of cold-blooded and distressing atrocities on the Indian frontier, which bring this strange custom into relief, are legion.

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him. From the first Jan Dad Khan and his sons had counselled the wounded man to allow them to carry him to the English doctor at Jumrud Fort. But the outlaw thought of his liberty and the price upon his head. Between his clenched teeth he reviled his benefactors for their humane suggestions, and accused them of cupidity of the reward. But after the third night the agony conquered the spirit and iron frame of the proud Pathan. His lip was bitten through, and his pores streamed with the sweat of his torment. He besought them to take him to Jumrud. In the cool of the evening Jan Dad and his sons acquiesced. They placed him on a lighter *charpoy*, and bore him away towards the British frontier.

Another hundred yards and he would have been across, when a tall Pathan stopped the little procession. It was Daud Khan. The bearers put the *charpoy* down. Daud Khan did not wait even to look into the wounded man's eyes, he just blew out his brains as he lay. Turning to Jan Dad he explained—

"There is a lady in my house who preferred this carrion to me!"

. . . . . .

There was a knock at the door of the Commandant's room.

"What is it, Soubadar?" queried the Commandant of the Khyber Rifles, as the native officer pushed the purdah aside and saluted.

"There is a wonderful gathering on the plain

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in front of the village of Jum; your Excellency should come and see it!"

"What is it about?"

"Your Excellency knows all about the affair of the popinjay Sharif Khan and Daud Khan?"

The Commandant nodded.

"Good; in five minutes Daud Khan turns loose his faithless wife!"

"Turns her loose? What do you mean by that, Soubadar?"

"Will not your Excellency come and see?"

The Commandant accompanied the native officer to the main terrace of the Fort. Beneath them lay the open *maidan*[1] which separates the curtain of the Fort from the village of Jum. The *maidan* was packed with villagers: they sat in a vast semi-circle. Not only was there a huge concourse on the *maidan*, but all the women of the settlement seemed to be gathered upon the house-tops. It was evident that some affair of unusual interest was about to take place.

It was all so close that the Commandant did not require his glasses. Presently there was a movement in the crowd. Two men were conducting a third person to the *maidan*. The Commandant rubbed his eyes, and then involuntarily unfastened his glasses. He had not been mistaken. A naked woman was being conducted to the arena. The progress was slow, as the poor creature, half demented at the indignity thus placed upon her,

[1] Plain.

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tried to hide her overwhelming shame by sinking to the ground and crouching at her tormentors' feet. At last they brought her to the fringe of the *maidan*. With a wail she sank to the ground. A man leaned over her and appeared to remonstrate with her. She grovelled at his feet, and tried to hide her nakedness and her shame in the long loose folds of his nether garments.

"Her husband is telling her that she has only to run to the Border to be free," said the Soubadar grimly. And then he added in the same monotony, "See, she believes him, the fool!"

The Soubadar had divined the truth. The forlorn creature, dazed beyond reason, believed her husband's words: that there was a haven for her if she faced the few yards to the British Border. She came to this conclusion just at the moment that the Commandant dropped his glasses, and excitedly cried out in Pushtu—

"Great God, what brutes! We must stop this!"

But the understanding had come too late. The girl—for she was barely more—gave one shudder, jumped nimbly to her feet, and darted into the open space with the swiftness and frenzied grace of a startled hare. In a moment Daud Khan's Martini spoke. The little figure gave one bound in the air and fell nerveless on the dusty plain. Instantly the crowd fell upon the lifeless body and beat it out of recognition. Daud Khan stood on the fringe of the pack of village pariahs,

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running a pull-through down the barrel of his rifle. The Commandant of the Khyber Rifles, blanched in face and trembling like an aspen, could even hear his callous laugh as he jested with his neighbours.

Thus were two more notches added to the stock of Daud Khan's rifle; and thus was the honour of his house satisfied.

The blood-money still remains unclaimed.

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A B D U L.

CHAPTER I.

"SAHIB! Kuha Singh is ill!"

The thin little voice came up from behind the row of crotons fringing the verandah. The Sahib, ensconced in the depths of a long verandah chair, threw aside the two-day-old copy of *The Englishman* that he was reading and, after puffing a big cloud of smoke from a gnarled-looking cheroot, summoned the owner of the voice to mount the verandah.

Abdul slipped out from the shadow of the plants, came gravely up the steps and stood shivering beside one of the whitewashed pillars. He made a weird little figure as he cowered under the eye of the white man. Abdul was perhaps ten years old. He may have been more. He may have been less. No one knew anything about Abdul's age or origin. The only data existing was the fact that four years ago Abdul's mother dragged her emaciated self and stunted man-child to Govindpur and died. It was when there were famine relief works at Govindpur.

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In the morning they found her cold and rigid beneath a *babool* tree and Abdul's great black eyes were peering out from beneath her shift of filthy rags. They brought the Sahib down to see the pathetic group. When they disentangled the little shivering brat it could not stand for the poverty of its being. It was just a miniature skeleton, tightly held together with pinched buff skin, and a pair of great wondering eyes. They had asked the Sahib what they should do with it. The Sahib had it taken up to the bungalow and carefully fed on milk. That was four years ago. From the date of arrival at Govindpur the history of Abdul's life is plain. The Sahib handed him over to Lakhi Mia, the *mali*.[1] That was how he came to be called Abdul. Lakhi Mia, for reasons that were sensual rather than religious, was an apostate Hindu, so of course he gave the foundling a Mahamedan name. Once Abdul was established in the garden he throve. Not by reason of Lakhi Mia's solicitude or any affection on the part of Lakhi's two wives, but by virtue of the Sahib's orders. It interested the Sahib to see the wrinkles disappear from the almost perished skin, to witness the arrival of a fresh covering to the staring bones and the eyes lose their abnormal prominence. With Lakhi Mia in such a matter the Sahib's wish was law. So Abdul flourished and grew sleeker. He never grew fat, nor did his physical development do

[1] Gardener.

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fair compliment to the hand that nourished him. But he had a mind, and therein was compensation to the Sahib. Old Ram Pershad Singh, the jemadar who, by his knowledge and judgment of human nature, had risen from a state of poverty to the possession of a house with brick walls, said, shaking his head, that Abdul was far too clever to be a child of beggars. And Lalji Lal, the estate accountant, found damning evidence against the virtue of his dead mother by reason of the fairness of his skin. But since, at odd moments, the countenance of the Sahib still shone upon him, Lalji Lal instructed the boy in the rudiments of caligraphy.

The reader will be wondering what all this has to do with Kuha Singh's ailments. At this period Kuha Singh was of very considerable importance in the Sahib's household. Moreover, Abdul and Gopal Bheriah, the wrestler, between them were responsible for Kuha Singh's welfare. Kuha Singh was a fighting ram. Kuha Singh was peerless from Bettia in the north down to the Ganges. Gopal said he was peerless in the whole world. Abdul believed this, since he believed that next to the Sahib and Chota Lal Misier, the wrestler was the greatest man alive. It was on account of this belief, qualified by a knowledge which he did not wish to impart, that Abdul was so perturbed.

Abdul stood beside the pillar playing with the strip of pink cloth which served him for head

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and body covering alike. The Sahib looked at him steadfastly.

"What is the matter?"

"Kuha Singh is ill!"

"What symptoms?"

"He won't eat!"

"What have you given him?"

"Peepul leaves and oat straw."

"Where were you last night, Abdul?"

"I slept in the shed by the *kalihan!*"[1] The lie came glibly.

"And where was Kuha Singh last night?"

"Where should he have been, Sahib? He was tied up as usual to his peg in the *kalihan!*"

"Then he must be very ill, Abdul!"

Abdul said nothing, but he changed his feet uncomfortably and watched the Sahib out of the corner of his eye. The Sahib said nothing. To Abdul's relief he turned and looked towards the river which, fifty yards away, meandered past the bungalow. The relief was but temporary. Abdul knew this from the Sahib's next remark.

"Is it not strange, Abdul, that Janki Bheriah should be collecting his sheep on the north side of the river?"

"Sheep often have to be collected in the morning!" answered Abdul, begging the topographical significance in the question.

"What makes sheep ford a river, Abdul?"

Abdul knew the game was up. His face puck-

[1] Threshing-floor.

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ered into a fair semblance of distress, and he entered upon a full confession. It was quite true that he had not slept at the *kalihan* on the preceding night, and it was quite true that Kuha Singh had broken his neck-shackle and consequently had a night out. It was also perfectly true that in the exuberance of his pent-up spirits the ram had made his way down to the sheep-pens where Janki Bheriah secured his flock. Nor was it surprising that the lusty Kuha, in his well-preserved virility, should burst asunder the flimsy sheep-hurdles and scatter Janki's terrified sheep to the four corners of the compass. You see Kuha was very lusty. He was the hero of twenty-six victories in the arena. Consequently it irked him that Janki's ten miserable rams should have the undisturbed felicity of two hundred sympathetic ewes. Moreover, the obstruction of the sheep-pens had annoyed him to such an extent that in his transports of anger he simply ran amok in the woolly flock. The general havoc he caused was appalling, and when in the grey of the morning the frightened Abdul had discovered him gorged to repletion with all the lusts of his kind, it was very evident that this little interlude would not prove beneficial to the course of training that he was undergoing. Consequently, when Abdul made confession of the awful *contretemps* he knew that he was deserving of his master's anger.

As Abdul finished his confession he looked up

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furtively at the Sahib. The latter ignored the incident of the ram, and there was no sign of anger in his voice as he put a further question to the boy.

"If you were not in the *kalihan*, Abdul, where were you?"

As a rule a native of India is never at a loss for an excuse. He appears to avoid telling the truth, on principle, and prefers a plausible invention to an accurate statement of facts. As a people their lives are so interwoven with domestic intricacies that they are never at a loss to conjure up some family claim to cover a misdemeanour. But in the case of Abdul this did not apply. He knew, and he knew that the Sahib knew, that he had no family claims to bring to his assistance. He therefore told the truth.

"Sahib, I went to Chaknota."

"And why did you go to Chaknota?"

"Sahib, a very big wrestler is the guest of Chota Lal Misier."

"Did you go by yourself?"

"No, I went with Gopal."

"What happened?"

"Nothing happened, Sahib. What could happen at night?"

"Then why did you go?"

"Just to see the wrestler."

"Why did Gopal go?"

"How can I say? Gopal is his own master."

At this moment Gopal himself put in an appear-

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ance. It was his custom every morning, after he had finished his daily exercises, to pay his respects to his patron and master. Gopal swaggered up the avenue which led to the bungalow with the air of a man who has achieved success in life. Now just as Kuha Singh, in the ram-run, was the unbeaten champion in the whole of the Patna division, so was Gopal in the wrestling patch. He stood 5 feet 10 on his bare feet, scaled 12 stone 3, and carried himself with the air of an emperor. He was trained to the turn of a hair, and his healthy skin shone a bright bronze in the white of the morning sun. His *muretta*[1] was of the finest muslin; his bamboo quarter-staff, knobbed with silver at every joint, was as polished as his skin; and his moustaches were brushed sideways to give him that finished look of fierce independence which is the pose of every well-conditioned native of India. And Gopal had reason for his coxcombry. Six years since, his Sahib had noticed his promise in the village games. Amongst the amateurs in the local rings he had found no equal. In consultation with Chota Lal Misier, the best authority between the Bagmatti and the Ganges, the Sahib had had him trained. Sher Afzul, the Knutt, than whom no more subtle teacher was known in this part of India, had given him his undivided attention for two years, with the result that the amateur had fulfilled every promise, and now stood as the champion

[1] Head-dress.

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wrestler amongst all local professionals. Well might he brush back his moustaches and set his *muretta* at a tilt that would have done justice to a popinjay Rajput, for had not he, Gopal, the shepherd, defeated the great Bissen Singh at Sonpur, and three times rubbed the shoulder of Yah Mahamed, the Lucknow champion, in the dust? "And all by the providence of the Sahib," he said daily, as he made his morning salutation.

"Gopal," said the Sahib, as his henchman stiffened himself after the salaam: "have you heard the tale of Kuha Singh?"

"Has not this ne'er-do-weel been weeping to me all the morning, Sahib?"

"But why did you take him down to Chaknota with you?"

"Is he of the kind to be denied?"

"And why did you go yourself to Chaknota?"

"Sahib, it was a misdeed, but there is one there with Chota Lal Misier who is an arrogant fellow. He sent me a message, and I went to take his measure."

"And what was the message, Gopal?"

"Sahib, the message is unspeakable."

"Well, give me the purport."

"This popinjay said, Sahib, that he had heard that there was one miserable shepherd in this country who, because he licked the shoes of a foreigner, thought he knew how to wrestle."

"And what did you say to that?"

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"What I sent by the messenger, Sahib, is unspeakable."

"And of the man?"

Gopal drew himself up.

"He is like a bull-frog. He talks loudest when the weather is wet and the night is with us."

"Can he wrestle?"

"God alone can say. But he is well found."

"Where is he from?"

"He is a rascally Mahamedan from Umballa, and to judge from his colour his father was burnt."

"Are you a match for him?"

"God knows, Sahib. I will not wrestle with him."

"Why not?"

"Lest it be said that Gopal can be jeered into wrestling out of his class by every vagrant boaster."

Small Abdul had quite forgotten his own affairs in his interest in the conversation. The Sahib turned to him.

"And what do you say, Abdul?"

"Sahib, the Mahamedan is no vain boaster. He can wrestle."

"How do you know?"

"Sahib, I have seen him."

"You young jackanapes, so you have been in the habit of playing truant from your charge. What did you see?"

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"Sahib, he wrestled with Adhin Gwala."

"But Adhin is no wrestler."

"It will take Gopal here half an hour to throw him."

"What of that?"

"Why, this Mia threw him three times in half an hour and each time with a new *pench*."[1]

Gopal showed no emotion at that argument.

"Sahib," he said, "Abdul is but a child. The bout in the afternoon was but a subtlety to enhance the boaster's reputation. Besides, to-night the wrestler goes west."

"What was he doing down here at all?"

"Sahib, he has been two weeks with Ali Nawab at Patna."

CHAPTER II.

Chota Lal Misier mounted the verandah steps with all the dignified decorum of a well-bred native. He had left his shoes on the gravel walk, and he salaamed and laid his *pugree*[2] for the space of two seconds on the floor of the verandah, and rising to his feet, waited in an attitude of humility for the Sahib to address him. The Sahib was still sitting in his comfortable chair and acknowledged the old man's salutation as became him. For a few sentences the visitor and host remarked on each other's

[1] Grip. [2] Head-dress.

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health, and the general health of their households. Then the Sahib broke into banter.

"Well, Chota Lal, I suppose that it is an alibi that you wish to prove, that you are here so early in the morning? Where were your young men looting last night?"

"Providence forfend that I should know anything about looting, Sahib. Those days are past. If, when I was young and the blood ran red, I did sometimes wield a quarter-staff and set fire to a thatched roof, it was only in the exuberance of boyish health. Now I am old and the *Sirkar*[1] has made it impossible for such things to be."

The Sahib shook his head.

"Wherefore, then, have you come to visit me?"

"Sahib, can you ask such a question? I have come, as has been my wont ever since you brought your august presence into this part of the world, to pay you my respects on every possible occasion."

"That is true, Chota Lal, but I have noticed that you have specially made it convenient to come and see me when the police are more than usually agitated with regard to your movements."

"Heaven forfend, Sahib, there has never been a police constable within the shadow of my courtyard but has come as a friend."

"Departed as a friend I should say, Chota Lal, to be more accurate."

[1] Government.

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"Let it go at that, Sahib."

The old reprobate keenly appreciated the joke against himself. Then the Sahib's face hardened.

"Away with small-talk, Chota Lal. What is your business? You may sit."

The old man, for he was a very old man, settled down on his heels.

"It is this, Sahib: I have come to arrange a match."

"On what grounds?"

"It is this way. There is a man come from the west, and he brings with him many credentials that are good."

"You refer to the Mia sent to you by Ali Nawab."

"Who shall disguise anything from the Sahib. It is the same."

"What is his name?"

"Najmat-ud-din."

"Najmat-ud-din! Then he can wrestle."

"The Sahib has knowledge of him?"

"He is a good second-class wrestler?"

"If the Sahib classifies him thus it must be so, but in that case we have none but third-class wrestlers in this part of the world. For the young fellows of Patna went down before him like earthen pots."

"I have heard of him, Chota Lal. He wrestled against Khem Singh at Patiala, and he was thrown after a bout of twenty minutes. He also tried to throw that Mugdum Ali of Ferozpur.

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This was a better bout, but the meeting broke up in disorder because no one was there whose decision could be trusted."

"The Sahib knows everything. But these are very great wrestlers that the Sahib has named."

"They are greater than your champion, Chota Lal."

"If the Sahib says so it must be true, but even if he is so poor a class-wrestler he will be better than the best in these districts."

"Chota Lal, you would pit him against my Gopal. Your young men must have done some successful housebreaking of late that you have so much money to risk."

"The Sahib knows that I have no money. Whither can such a one as I find money? Agriculture is not what it was."

"Neither is wrestling, Chota Lal. You would be throwing your money into the river if I were to make a match between your champion and Gopal."

"If the Sahib says so it must be true. Will there be a match?"

"No, Chota Lal, there will be no match."

"The Sahib has the ordering of his own affairs."

"That is truth, Chota Lal, but I take Gopal to the west."

The old man's eyes glittered.

"Is there no place in our own country where your honour could lose money? It has always

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seemed to me that this country was not barren after this manner."

"You speak truth, Chota Lal. I have reason to believe that this country is full of thieves."

The old dacoit leader simulated not to have noticed the thrust.

"Then why, Sahib, go so far afield?"

"Because, Chota Lal, there is none between this and Nepal that is the equal of Gopal Bheriah."

The old man shook his head.

"There is no mango as sweet as that which falls in one's own garden. Methinks your honour appraises your Gopal too highly."

"And why? You speak in riddles."

"Sahib, there is no riddle. If you will listen to an old man, who in his day was a great wrestler, you will see that I am right. Gopal, as the Sahib has justly said, is a good wrestler. To use the Sahib's own words with regard to wrestlers of this part of the world, Gopal is a good second-class man. But, Sahib, he has no heart. What is he? He is but a Bheriah, a tender of sheep. He is not even a Hindu! How can he have a heart? Now, if he had been a Babun or a Rajput, or even a good class Mahamedan, in the general order of things he would have had a heart. But a Bheriah! No! Truly he is well fed, well trained, and well practised; but in wrestling, when all things are equal, it is the man with the good heart that wins. Sahib, the man that would trust his money to the

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prowess of a wrestler who is not a man of good heart is as confiding as the cultivator who hopes to reap early paddy from the Ganges flats."

"On what grounds do you base this hypothesis, Chota Lal?"

"The Sahib will remember that in December last year Gopal Bheriah was pitted against Adhin Gwala. We watched that contest closely. Gopal won. He had to win. He was more skilful, better trained, and quicker than the Gwala."

"Well?" said the Sahib.

"But, Sahib, he fought the fight of a coward. If he had been a man of heart, he could have upset the Gwala in half the time."

"But the Gwala was much stronger than he. He only waited for an opening."

"And there, if the discourtesy be forgiven me, I may say that the Sahib is wrong. The Gwala in his ignorance gave him opening after opening. But no! The Bheriah would not take them. He was afraid of any sporting risks."

"We in the West call that science."

"And we in the East, Sahib, call it want of heart. Mark my words, if you pit this Bheriah against any of the first-class men of the west, he will lie on his stomach and pray to god to give him an opening. That is not wrestling. The good wrestler will make his own opening. But, Sahib, I have wearied you long."

"Think nothing of that, Chota Lal. It is instructive to discuss these things. But I think

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your estimate is wrong. You are biassed against Gopal because of his caste. But how about Kuha Singh? Is he also a coward?"

"Does Kuha Singh go west also?"

"Most assuredly."

"Then, Sahib, Chota Lal Misier will have occasion to go west also, for it seems that this must be a very interesting tour. May Providence provide that it be profitable."

As the old man bowed himself down the verandah steps, to where his shoes were lying on the gravel, a little brown form slipped away to the shadow of the plants.

. . . . . .

Gopal was in the wrestling patch. He was in the middle of his evening training, and at the moment when small Abdul pushed in behind the grass screen, he was lying flat on his face in the soft sand, while one of his "runners-up" was engaged in trampling on his back. The formalities and methods of the training of Indian wrestlers differ from those of the West, and part of the treatment includes this particular form of back massage. Abdul settled himself down beside the little half circle of lesser exponents of the craft, who were watching this finish to the exercises. When the back treatment was concluded, Gopal, pulling a cloth over his naked person, sat down in front of his *confrères*, who immediately discussed his condition and progress with true oriental sycophancy. Any one who has mixed

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much with the masses in the East must have been struck with the ability of the children to join in the conversation with their elders. Thus, when Abdul's little voice chimed in with the general conversation his remarks received an attention which, with us, would have been denied to such a child.

"What does it mean when a wrestler has no heart?"

The explanation was immediate. Each of the experts present had his own view, and each explained it to the entire satisfaction of every one except the child.

"Has Gopal got heart?"

The directness of this question did not disconcert the wrestlers. They did not even trouble to ask why the question had been put, but spent the next few minutes in expatiating on the greatness of their hero's heart. But the next question aroused their curiosity, for the boy asked which had the greater heart, Gopal or Adhin Gwala.

"But why dost ask?" said one of the group.

"Because I heard Chota Lal Misier tell the Sahib that Adhin Gwala had more heart than Gopal here."

Gopal smiled indulgently, while his admirers raised a chorus of disapproval of Chota Lal Misier's powers of estimation. But even these explanations did not satisfy the boy.

"But is Gopal a first-class wrestler?" he piped.

The sycophants were emphatic that he was.

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"And is he as good as the first-class wrestlers in the west?"

The wrestlers agreed that he was, and then Gopal, with a shrewder knowledge of the boy's mind than the others, demanded why he asked. His answer made a great effect.

"It is because the Sahib is going to take him up west to wrestle."

At daybreak on the following morning it was known in every considerable village within a radius of fifty miles that Gopal Bheriah, the Sahib's *protégé*, was going to the west to wrestle.

CHAPTER III.

The heat was almost intolerable. Although the sun, blood-red in colour, was sinking into a belt of haze, there seemed no diminution in its bequest of late summer heat. The air was heavy and stagnant. The atmosphere, burdened with twelve hours of relentless sun, struck with choking force. The whole landscape was grey with a fine dust hanging wearily in puffs and clouds. Nothing moved. The great white road was deserted, and the village pariahs, save for their heaving sides and lolling tongues, lay motionless in such shadow as cactus hedge and mud walls afforded. The birds even seemed too overburdened with the sultry atmosphere to search

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for food, and sat on the dusty branches of the peepul tree with open bills.

Yet behind the villages down by the river flat a crowd had assembled. They cowered from the heat in the shade of Dilchand Partak's *phulwari*,[1] and watched with eager gaze the visitors who lolled under the punkah in the Lambadar's verandah. It was to be a great day in this hot, parched village eighty miles from the nearest railway. The Sahib from the east had brought a noted ram to do battle with the pick of the Lambadar's fighting cattle. Village report said that the Sahib had wagered a thousand rupees on the prowess of his champion, and that Dilchand Partak had accepted the wager, and had selected "Rustum the One-eyed" to do battle for his silver. It was said that the Sahib's ram had fought twenty-six fights without ever once having shown his tail. They all knew that Rustum had never been beaten. It was to be a great fight, and the village writers were hard at work registering the bets.

Presently the Sahib, the Lambadar and the more select of the latter's guests came down from the verandah, and the servants came running with chairs and set them up on the bank of the garden. Forgetting the heat, the crowd moved to the run marked on the parched turf. It took six lusty henchmen all their time

[1] Garden.

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to press the eager throng back to form a lane for the match. Presently the first of the competitors arrived. It was Rustum the One-eyed. He was a churlish, unwilling champion, and could only be brought to the lists by a stratagem. A timid-eyed ewe was led in front of him, and he followed with two lusty keepers hanging on to his collar lash. They led him up to the far end of the run, and the Sahib and the Lambadar inspected him. While they discussed his points, the spectators indulged in laudatory comment. "Did they notice the gleam in his solitary eye?" "They should mark the abnormal growth of his horns!" "The bump on his nose was the result of the fight at the Sultanpur *mela*."[1] And all the time the ram kept its restricted gaze upon the ewe which, bleating plaintively, did its best to shun his attentions by edging modestly towards the spectators. Then the far end of the crowd opened, and Kuha Singh was tugged into the lists. He was honoured with four attendants. The supple Gopal Bheriah stood astride his back. Two of the wrestler's stalwart trainers held the throat-lash, while little Abdul, adorned for the occasion in a green silk cap with a gold lace band, stood in front with a bunch of peepul leaves. Kuha Singh, doubtless as mindful of hard bumps as the one-eyed champion, came to the lists with every evidence of reluctance. But he was a

[1] Fair.

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thing of beauty. Gopal and Abdul had spared no pains in his toilette. His curving horns were polished with oil. Vermilion rings had been painted round their base, and a line of the pigment was carefully traced down his forehead. Little tinsel tassels hung from his throat-lash. He was in the pink of condition. As he stood furtively eyeing the crowd, licking his lips with nervous tongue and stamping his slender forelegs to disconcert the flies, he raised even more favourable comment than the wicked-looking old Cyclops at the far end of the lists. After a lengthy scrutiny of both champions, the Sahib and the *élite* retired to their seats upon the bank. The ewe was hustled into the crowd, and before the irate Rustum could follow her his trainer had him by the horns, and, standing astride his back, kept him by sheer muscular force, head on, towards his rival. Gopal lined up Kuha Singh in like manner, and simultaneously the throat-lashes were unleashed. The rams were now about forty yards apart, held by the horns to face each other by the strong men athwart their withers.

At a given signal both animals were left clear. To the onlookers this is the psychological moment. To all intents and purposes neither ram appears interested in the other, and they both back. For a second it looks as if they are shirking. But far from that, they are only feeling for an adequate length of run

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to give sufficient impetus. This they seem to find simultaneously. As a bolt is shot from a cross-bow, each launches himself against the other. Both animals have lowered their heads, and they come together, horn to horn, with a resounding crash. They shake asunder. A moment they appear dazed, and then they slowly back. They continue to back until the desired length for impetus is reached. Then like lightning they crash in again. Five times have they met with equal buffet. To the onlooker there is nothing to choose between them. Suddenly, without warning, Kuha Singh edges towards the crowd. It is not even a half-turn. It is just a suspicion that he would prefer to avoid another impact. But the suspicion did not escape the restricted vision of old Rustum. He took off as he stood, and Kuha Singh was only just in time to receive the onslaught on his horns. Again they separated. The local backers were now vociferous. Gopal Bheriah and the visitors were silent. The one-eyed Rustum backed with alacrity, and at last Kuha Singh did what he had never done before. He refused to face the music. He showed a flank and tried to bolt into the crowd. Rustum was on to him like a thunderbolt. He butted him clean into the open ditch of the *phulwari* and, amid the cheers of the crowd as they scattered to avoid his fury, chivied the luckless Kuha from the arena.

No one took any further interest in the de-

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feated ram. Panting and crestfallen, he was captured and chained up in an outhouse. But if, that evening, any of the visitors who attended the Lambadar's festivities had thought to have visited that outhouse, they would have found a little brown boy lying amid the oat-hay sobbing as if his heart would break.

CHAPTER IV.

Again there was a great excitement at Dilchand Partak's *phulwari*. It was a far greater crowd than that which had been gathered at the time of the ram fight. It was to be a great wrestling bout. Men had even come from Bareili by train to see the great struggle, and the Partak's homestead was crowded with the *ekkas* and bullock hackories which had brought spectators from far and near. For it was an occasion. The great and redoubtable Moula Bakhs, the champion wrestler in all Rohilkand, was to try a throw with one Gopal Bheriah, a wrestler brought out of the east by a Sahib. Never before had Dilchand Partak's village seen such a crowd. If it had not been for the good offices of the *kotwal*[1] and his four *kanstabiles* there would never have been any order at all. And the Partak Sahib had made such arrangements! The wrestling pâtch was newly dug and was roped-in under

[1] Police-inspector.

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the shade of the trees. A *shamiana* had been erected over a daïs for the more distinguished guests, and a ramp dug all round the ditch of the garden so that the spectators could sit and see the sport. It was after the midday siesta that the wrestle was to begin, so that the champions might have the advantage of the long hours before sunset.

First came the Sahib with Dilchand Partak, and many distinguished guests from Bareili. There was the Rai Sahib and Muktear Ali Khan, the horse-dealer, and many others. And when they were seated Kissun Lal, the *gomasta*, recited a poem from the Persian that spoke of heroes of the fields of battle and sport. When the recitation was finished every one was ready for the champions. Moula Bakhs came first. They brought him through the crowd with music, for he was a personage. He was wrapped in a big cloak, but the crowd were able to speculate upon the breadth of his shoulders. Gopal Bheriah came quickly into the ring. He was attended by his two "runners-up" and small Abdul, and their pretension was so modest that it was some time before they could make their way through the crowd. Gopal, swathed in a long white coat, sat down demurely on the fringe of the arena.

"*Wah! Wah!*"

The crowd could not contain the expressions of delight at the magnificent figure. The Mahamedan stood six foot in his naked feet, his

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arms, back and loins one mass of smooth shining muscle. If his calves were spare, his thighs were enormous. He was a picture of supple, muscular manhood. He salaamed to the dignitaries beneath the tent and then, slapping his muscles, pirouetted round the arena, so that a second murmur rose from the crowd, especially from the veiled ladies on the adjacent house-tops.

In comparison with Moula Bakhs, Gopal Bheriah crept into the public gaze. And Gopal, as we know, was a little shorter than the Mahamedan, but he was no less a splendid specimen of well-developed manhood. The healthy gloss of his skin, the fine ripple of his perfect muscles, and the iron bands of his arms and legs were no whit less supple and pliant than those of his rival. But he had not the same *aplomb* of carriage. He stood in the arena the champion of the country-side as opposed to the quicker intelligence of the town-bred expert. Gopal salaamed to the daïs, and stood sulkily beside his pair. The *kotwal* gave the word, the seconds came up and rubbed the wrestlers' limbs with dry earth. This preliminary complete, both competitors stepped forward and touched the feet of their respective patrons on the daïs, salaamed, and faced each other in the arena.

For the space of a moment the two men looked into each other's eyes. Then began the mummeries which are the preliminaries of Indian wrestling. They salaamed to each other, touched

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fingers and, springing back, smote their own chests and thighs with the strange popping sound pecular to the sport. They pirouetted like South African ostriches on a spring morning. They circled, and then, from a new position, with hands on knees gazed fixedly at each other. For ten minutes at least this pantomime continued until the tall Moula essayed upon an opening. He twined the strong fingers of his left hand in those of Gopal's right, and with his own right smote the Hindu a ringing buffet on the ear. This just to disconcert him, for with the rapidity of a striking cobra Moula played for an opening. The hand that smote was on the Hindu's loin-cloth. But Gopal was as quick in making a counter, and in a whirl of dust the wrestlers had shaken free of each other almost before the spectators had realised that they had closed. The crowd murmured their approval. They saw in that first bout that the redoubtable Moula had met a man worthy of his metal.

A moment to re-smear themselves with earth and the champions were again gyrating in search for an opening. The Mahamedan changed his tactics. He feinted a slip and gave a momentary chance. Gopal fell into the trap; he seized the Mahamedan's head in both hands and by sheer strength swung him over. But in twisting, Moula imprisoned the Hindu's right leg and whirled him off his disturbed balance. The two men revolved like a catherine-wheel and came to earth, Gopal

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face down in the mud, the Mahamedan astride him.

"*Shabash! Shabash!*" from the crowd.

Gopal stiffened himself all over while his opponent exerted his strength to grind the face of the fallen man in the mud. Then he worked for a lever purchase under the Hindu's right arm. At last he seemed to get it. In spite of stiffened leg and protecting elbow the Hindu seemed to be slowly turning over on his back. He was down half-way and the expectant crowd was palpitating with excitement when suddenly everything changed. Gopal had twisted like an eel and, in instantaneous motion, had converted the leverage against him to his own advantage. When the whirl of dust had drifted aside, the Mahamedan was below and the Hindu above. It had been a masterly expedient, and the crowd again voiced its approval.

And thus the struggle continued for at least two hours. At times the combatants would spring apart and reshuffle for the grip. But for the most part they were grovelling in the dust, and although he saved himself time after time, by almost miraculous agility, it was seen that Gopal was more often beneath than above his opponent. The crowd realised this and signalised their disapproval. Chota Lal Misier, standing behind the Sahib under the awning, whispered in his ear:

"Did I speak the untruth, Sahib, when I said

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that yon Bheriah had a craven heart? See! he would tire the Mia out. Those tricks may pass with country louts, but not with wrestlers!"

The Sahib made no answer.

But the words of Chota Lal were proving true. Gopal made no effort to seize a standing grip. He was content to grovel. And as he lay face down upon the ground, his brilliant counters came at rarer intervals, and were less effective. Moula Bakhs was not tiring, and he was learning, little by little, the Bheriah's tricks. His attacks too were becoming more ferocious. At least twice he turned the Bheriah three-quarters over, and each time Gopal saved himself from the double touch of his shoulders as by a miracle. The spectators could see his distress. A little more, one more pivot in the dust, and he must be a beaten man.

Then it was, when the two men lay locked upon the ground, that a small form slipped under the rope and ran into the arena. It was Abdul. He had a small bamboo blow-pipe in his hand. Swiftly he ran to the wrestlers, put the bamboo to his lips, leaned down and was gone. Moula Bakhs' grip seemed to relax. The telepathy of touch gave Gopal the office. He made a supreme effort and, to the marvel of all, the Mahamedan was as a feather in his hands. When the dust subsided it was seen that the Bheriah was sitting astride the champion of Rohilkand, whose broad shoulders were flat in the dust.

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But before the spectators could applaud the victory, a shriek went up from the fallen hero.

"My eyes! My eyes!"

Then the crowd realised what had taken place. They rose in their wrath, and if it had not been for the *kotwal* and his *kanstabiles*, they would have lynched the Bheriah then and there.

Little Abdul had seen the approaching defeat of his master's champion, and sooner than suffer the agony of a second humiliation, he had puffed a charge of cayenne pepper into Moula Bakhs' eyes.

. . . . . .

It was three months before Abdul, gaunt and starved, turned up at Govindpur. The Sahib did not beat him. His emaciated frame told a sufficient tale of atonement.

"But why did you do it, Abdul?" he asked kindly.

"Because I knew that Chota Lal Misier knew more about wrestlers than the whole world!"

"But what has that to do with it?"

"Sahib, Chota Lal Misier said that Gopal had no heart, so I had to be prepared!"

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THE DISCOURAGEMENT OF SURENDRA NATH MUKERJI.

JOHN ROBINSON was tired of his own signature. He had been signing his name continuously for at least half an hour. He was tired of the uninteresting sameness of his simple patronymic, tired of the monotonous drone of the head clerk's voice, and wearied to death of the dry, baked atmosphere of his court-house. John Robinson was just twenty-nine. Small of stature, slight of build, he was of the type of Englishmen whom a long descent of ruling blood has fashioned to maintain and order this vast Empire. His history is simple and ordinary. The son of an officer in the Indian army who had been killed at Peiwar Kotal, who had in his turn been the son of a Bengal civilian, John Robinson had acquitted himself well at all manly games at Wellington, had graduated with indifferent distinction from the Royal Military College, had served eighteen months in a British regiment, and had then done five years as a dashing subaltern of horse in the Piffers, to finally transfer to the Commission, in which important administrative service we now find him.

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With the exception of the opening which was found for him in the Commission—due to good luck and heredity rather than to any proved excellency of his own—John Robinson's career had been that of ninety-five per cent of the subalterns who enter the Indian army. He had always proved himself respectful and gentlemanly enough to warrant the approbation of his seniors; he was sufficiently level-headed to guarantee the esteem of his company and squadron commander in turn, and was sufficient athlete and sportsman to warrant the affection of his inferiors. Until he blossomed out into a political officer he had little opportunity of judging for himself as to the manner of man he really was. He had been a keen shikaree when his purse would warrant an expenditure in ammunition; he had played once or twice in tournaments as number one for his regiment, and had ridden a very fair race across country; but until he transferred to the Commission he had never really found himself.

As a matter of fact the regimental officer, as long as he remains a regimental officer, has few opportunities of really finding himself, unless fortune smiles upon him on active service. Regimental duty is so attuned to a scale of custom, regulation, and tradition, that eventually it saps the originality of youth and dulls the perception of maturity. John Robinson had two years' service in the Commission to his credit. At the end of

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those two years his character had undergone a complete metamorphosis. From the irresponsible and more or less dependent junior regimental officer he had ripened into the hard responsible executive servant of the Crown. The hereditary powers of administration, dormant in youth, had developed with lightning rapidity as soon as he found himself, though still almost a boy, handling situations which required firm and immediate decisions, moral nerve, and the courage of spontaneous conviction.

John Robinson had been clearing up a group of arrears. He had only returned on the preceding day from a hurried visit to the scene of a small Yagistan raid. On the surface it was a trivial affair—a police post burnt, a couple of "Catch-em-alive-ohs" lying on their backs with glazed eyes. But such things, though of frequent occurrence, may often increase in significance unless someone in authority is there to grapple with them. As soon as he had heard of the outrage, John Robinson had posted to the affected area. His movements were as swift as his judgments. But his absence from his office even for four days had piled up arrears of work. For this reason a portion of this hot, close morning had been spent in the signing of documents.

After the last of these blue and buff slips had been carefully placed in their respective dockets by his head clerk, the file opened with one of those long and tedious hearings which are the

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portion of those who dispense justice in the East, and which are generally a sacrifice of valuable time to the pedantry of oriental procedure. A handsome young Pathan was in the dock. A villainous-looking merchant, blind in one eye and well stricken in years, accused the prisoner of having broken into his house to steal four brass eating utensils and a silver watch. The hoary old trader brought a bunch of witnesses to prove his case. These included a police constable with the household truck that it was alleged had been stolen. John Robinson, as soon as he heard the preamble of the plaint, just looked across to the dock and rapidly made up his mind as to the true character of the case. The young prisoner stood there as straight as a lance, and as handsome as these wild sons of the Border frequently are. The magistrate knew perfectly well that the five rupees' worth of brass platters had nothing to do with it at all. If there had been a burglary in which the accused had taken part, it had been a subtle theft from the trader's household of something which the old miser was ashamed to own. The precise details it was not necessary to worry about: the prisoner in the dock had doubtless played the troubadour outside the old man's homestead, and had won favours from some fair young inmate, whose body wealth and age could purchase, but whose heart had readily gone forth to the stripling at the gate. John Robinson had heard cases by the score in which the issues were

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similar, yet it behoved him to stay through the long hearing of perjured witnesses, whose testimony had been purchased by the one-eyed old scoundrel who desired a vengeance for the wrong he was afraid to name.

John Robinson had made up his mind almost as soon as the principals had been hustled into their places. Every one in the court-house knew that the present plaint was false, but such is the oriental mystery of the Purdah, no one considered it improper that it stood in its present form. The main consideration before the magistrate was the extent of the punishment he should award. His own blood ran warm, and as, in his momentary sweep of the court, he sized up plaintiff and accused, his heart went out to the handsome young gallant who had wrought the havoc in the trader's household. In the meantime the lying witnesses were pushed up in front of him, and paraded one after another by a local pleader.

John Robinson sat with his elbows on the magisterial bench, and gazed abstractedly into the far corner of his court. He was dispensing justice. He saw two sparrows roosting upon one of the joists under the thatched roof of the court-house. They were a cock and a hen, and feeling the heat, they sat with panting throats and open bills, utterly disdainful of the punkah swinging close beneath them.

The reader may wonder what two insignificant little sparrows may have to do with the dispen-

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sation of justice. In this case they were destined to have a great deal, since John Robinson had fixed upon them as the determining agency in his coming decision. He had long ago arrived at the knowledge that, in the maze of untruthfulness and perjury in which every native will wrap his plaint, it is almost impossible to discover justice. In fact there were times when he almost made up his mind that the native never desired justice; that all he looked for was a decision, which, if it was not just, was at least conclusive. Something the jaded pleader had said in his cross-examination of the prisoner had touched the human feelings of the magistrate upon the bench. He pictured to his mind the bright-eyed little damsel, still in her teens, who, escaping from the niggardly lust of the old fossil who had purchased her from her parents, had thrown herself into the arms of the manly young blade who at least could claim to be her more natural mate. John Robinson determined to give the young popinjay a chance. There was nothing yet against him —he was not one of the nomadic thieves of the Border, but was the elegant son of an impoverished Malik, and an *umaidwar* [1] for military service under the great White Sirkar.

As the pleader droned on, John Robinson, with his eyes fixed on the sparrows, threw the fate of the prisoner into their keeping. He made the mental resolve that if the male sparrow left its

[1] Aspirant.

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perch before the hen, the accused should leave the court with nothing to queer his chance of military service, but if it should be the hen, then he would award such sentence as the code required; and as he came to this decision he thanked his lucky star that his roving court was untainted with those legal luminaries that have sprung up in thousands round the educational institutions of a paternal British legislature, and who, if they do not direct the course of true justice, yet add a hundred per cent of useless labour to the Bench.

Even as the young magistrate was contemplating these things there was a commotion in the verandah of the court-house. It caused the punkah-coolie to pause in his pull; the unwonted jerk which followed disturbed the sparrows. The cock, deserting the hen, flew to the next joist. Having noted the flight of the bird John Robinson languidly turned his head to ascertain the cause of the flutter that was taking place in the well of his court-house. To his surprise a sleek, self-sufficient Bengali Babu was moving up towards the seats apportioned to the local *vakils*. The new arrival was a young man of about thirty, round-visaged and well-proportioned. He was wearing the costume of his kind. His nether limbs were festooned in the voluminous folds of a spotless *dhoti;* white socks and shiny jemimas covered his feet; a small black silk cap and a shirt completed his costume. Arrived at the seats below the Bench, the new arrival, half bowing and half

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salaaming, introduced himself in the mincing tones of Babu-English.

"It may please your honour to know that I am Surendra Nath Mukerji, barrister-at-law, and that I have elected at your Honour's convenience to practise in your Honour's court."

John Robinson's first impulse was to turn and rend this aspirant for legal honours in his jurisdiction for having had the audacity to cause a disturbance during the hearing of a case. If he had been two days removed from a regimental officer he would probably have lost his temper, much as Surendra Nath Mukerji had intended he should. But those two years on the frontier had fashioned the irresponsible subaltern into the diplomatic administrator. In a moment the full meaning of this apparition of suave demeanour and oily smile flashed through the young magistrate's mind. Hitherto the sphere of his jurisdiction had been free of all such encumbrance. A local *vakil* may be sat upon and extinguished, but a barrister-at-law must be heard. Moreover, his interpretation of the law would usually vary from the despotic dispensation of justice which, though it met the present needs of the frontier, might not stand the light of superior academic revision, which the knowledgeable barrister would instruct his clients to clamour for. All these things flashed through the young magistrate's mind. In a second his plan was made; he stifled his first feeling of resentment, and turned a face upon the new-

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comer as bland and smiling as that of the Babu himself.

"This, Mr Surendra Nath Mukerji, is indeed an unexpected pleasure. If you had only let me know that you were going to pay me this honour I would certainly have made suitable arrangements for you. Are you retained in this present case? No? Well, then, you must let the case proceed. Will you oblige me, Mr Surendra Nath Mukerji, by taking a chair? As you are not engaged in the case, I shall be delighted if you will come up here and sit beside me."

Neither Surendra Nath Mukerji nor the court, which in its entirety was watching the introduction of this novelty to their legal centre, had expected such suavity and good nature from their magistrate. His reputation in the district, although unimpeachable for hard justice and fair dealing of the kind they understood, was not one that gave promise of such a welcome reception to a native barrister. A little tremor passed over the well of the court as the immaculate Bengali stepped up on the daïs and settled himself in the chair which the head clerk placed for him. He thanked the magistrate profusely, and congratulated himself upon his good fortune, that he should, in his first essay, have found an official so gracious, and who showed such respect for his presence, as to place him, when a spectator, on an equality with himself. He knew what this meant to the assembled numbers in the court-

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house. He knew exactly how this reception would be received by the native mind; it meant an immediate inrush of briefs; for as long as he stood alone, and had this honour shown him by the magistrate, there was not a native in the whole of the judicial area that would not believe that his retention would mean a decided "pull" in all cases brought up for settlement.

Having settled the illustrious barrister down by his side, John Robinson signalled for the case to proceed, and, remembering the flight of the cock-sparrow, ultimately allowed the over gallant, if immoral, Pathan to step from the dock a free man.

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On the following morning John Robinson took his seat in his court, with plans definitely matured, to deal with the new nuisance which this enterprising barrister had foisted upon him. The file was an exceptionally long one, and as he had anticipated, in each of the more important cases counsel was engaged. When the court was opened Surendra Nath Mukerji ruffled into his place: bustling with papers and importance, he gave even less of a salaam to the Bench than on the preceding day. John Robinson from above nodded to him graciously, saying: "Good morning, Mr Surendra Nath, I see that you have settled down to hard work without delay."

"Yes, your Honour," replied the Babu; "it is most flattering to me to find that I am so much in request."

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"Let me see," said the young magistrate; "I think I shall take the case of Mulchand Bunnia *versus* Seyd Akbar Khan first."

"Certainly, your Honour, that will be most fortunate," answered the barrister in the strident tones which a Bengali always assumes when he wishes to impress an audience. At that moment a *chaprassie* in a red *lungi* brought a letter to the magistrate. John Robinson took the missive and opened it carelessly. He just glanced his eye over the contents and said casually to his clerk: "There will have to be a general postponement; here is an urgent summons which takes me at once to Kahu Kotal."

The magistrate made this statement loudly enough for the barrister to hear. "But, your Honour," came up from the *vakils'* bench, "will the postponement be for long?"

"Oh no," came the answer; "I will do my best to meet you, Mr Surendra Nath Mukerji. I see that you are engaged in the first five cases on my file: I will hold a court for the hearing of two of them at Kahu Kotal to-morrow morning at eleven."

"Very good, your Honour," answered the Babu, smiling to think how easily fees could be piled up with a considerate magistrate awarding a judicious sequence of postponements. The smile was tempered a little when, as the magistrate left his chair, the *vakil* who was instructing Surendra Nath Mukerji informed him that Kahu

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Kotal was a miserable village fifty miles away, conterminous with the frontier. As soon as the barrister realised this, it was his intention to have asked for a further postponement until the magistrate returned to his Sudda Station; but John Robinson had already gone, and his clerk, who possessed one of those impassive countenances which are not rare in well-bred natives, answered the Bengali's query in picturesque vernacular: "The falcon must fly swift and straight when it is loosed against the partridge."

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As every Pathan on that section of the frontier knew, fifty miles in the day, no matter the weather, was nothing to Robinson Sahib. But fifty miles of sun-baked *tehsil*, during the month of May, in a jolting *eka* was a misery to the soft, sleek Bengali.

Robinson Sahib, when occasion necessitated such a course, could make himself perfectly comfortable for the night on a *charpoy* in the mud verandah of a village malik's home. His clerks and court officials, moving in the shadow of his influence, were now inured to erratic journeying all along the frontier. Out of respect to the young magistrate the villagers were only too pleased to do their little to make them comfortable; sleek Bunnias and other litigants, however, were not usually keen to undertake the discomfort and extra expense of the political officer's emergency courts. But in this case, owing to the desire of the but

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partially informed barrister to profit by the success of his initial introduction to Robinson's court, the clients were prevailed upon to requisition his appearance at Kahu Kotal.

Now the frontier villager, although he is perfectly prepared to bestir himself in the interests of the retinue of the administrative authority of his district, is not drawn towards a Bengali satellite. Consequently, when Surendra Nath Mukerji appeared before the magistrate on the day after his arrival at Kahu Kotal, he reckoned that he had just passed the worst twenty-four hours of his life. He was aching in every bone from the jolting he had had in the *eka;* he had been forced to catch what sleep he could in the early hours of the morning on an empty stomach, and the food which he had since purchased at famine rates had so nauseated him that he was practically starving; but he came up smiling; at the best it was a sickly smile, and it died away, when, after congratulating him on having accomplished so strenuous a journey so successfully, the magistrate apologised for not being able to hear his particular cases that morning, as circumstances required his presence at a village forty-five miles away, in the low hills on the Border. The look of despair which crept into the Bengali's face so far moved the adamant John Robinson that he said he would, if counsel wished it, postpone the cases until he returned to his Sudda Station. "When will that be, Huzoor?" asked

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the barrister faintly, dropping unconsciously into a respectful method of address, which had hitherto been foreign to him. For a second the faint indication of a smile flickered at the corners of the magistrate's mouth. "It will probably be four weeks," came the answer; "certainly not less—possibly it may be six."

The Bengali groaned inwardly—he could hardly afford to sit still for six weeks without employment; but he braced himself calmly as he made answer: "In that case, your Honour, I will be in attendance to-morrow."

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Now if it had been difficult for Surendra Nath Mukerji to travel from the Sudda Station to Kahu Kotal, that journey was simple and comfortable in comparison with the efforts required to reach the next fixture for the court. Over a great portion of the road an *eka* was impossible, and the city-nurtured Surendra Nath Mukerji, being too timorous to trust his portly frame upon the back of a village pony, had, perforce, to make at least twenty miles of the journey on foot. With the perspiration pouring from him until his light muslins were saturated; aching in every bone; limping from the blisters on his feet, the barrister dragged himself into the hamlet of Pundaul. There was no rest-house, so, totally exhausted, he sought the shade of a mud wall until his clients could find some nook to which he might retire.

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But long before the miserable pedestrian had reached Pundaul he had determined that, if he should chance to survive the rigours of his present circumstances, he would never again leave the Sudda Station, even if it reduced his income by seventy-five per cent. He had learned from those in whose company he had travelled that the present mobility of Robinson Sahib was nothing out of the ordinary. "Oh, he is a very cricket," they said; "neither God nor man can tell in which direction he will jump, and though he may tire three horses and his *amlah* to death, yet he himself will never turn a hair."

Being refreshed with drink and the rough fare of the hamlet, Surendra Nath Mukerji determined to see his present cases through, and then to return by direct and easy stages to the Sudda Station. All traces of his original debonair abandon were wanting when he limped into court the following morning; there remained not the faintest suspicion of starch in his clothes; the sleekness had passed from his skin, and he subsided into his seat looking more like the jackdaw of Rheims than the blatant barrister that had burst upon John Robinson's court three days previously. There was so little ostentation in his attitude that John Robinson, dealing with a petition from the headman of a particular Jirga, who had travelled to Pundaul to interview him, was able to affect not to have noticed the Babu's arrival. Having settled with the immediate

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demands of this petition, John Robinson turned to his head clerk and asked if there was anything pressing on the file. From the nonchalant manner in which he put the question no one in the court, save perhaps the impassive visaged head clerk, could have realised that the young magistrate asked the question with his tongue in his cheek. He had not failed to notice the woe-begone appearance of the erstwhile festive Bengali, and he felt confident that there would be no miscarriage of his plan, when, in response, the head clerk replied that there were the two cases in which counsel was employed for the defence.

"Of course, I should have remembered that—and is counsel present?" he queried. It remained with the head clerk to answer the question. "Oh yes," said John Robinson, as if suddenly recalling to mind the existence of the barrister. "Mr Surendra Nath Mukerji, it is most unfortunate, but I find that I am obliged to postpone your cases. I have unfortunately received a message this morning which makes it imperative that I go back to Kahu Kotal. Would you like me to fix a day there, say to-morrow, or the next day, or would you prefer to wait until I have returned to the Sudda Station?"

At the mere mention of a return journey to Kahu Kotal the Bengali had given way to an audible groan. He raised himself slowly to his feet, and said: "Your Honour, the fees ruling in

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the High Court in Calcutta would not entice me to that detested spot again. If your Honour will permit it, I will wait upon your Honour in the Sudda Station."

"Very good, very good, Mr Surendra Nath," answered the magistrate good-naturedly; "I quite understand that you find difficulties in our rough-and-ready life on the frontier. We live a strenuous life, Mr Surendra Nath, and it keeps us in hard training." But Mr Surendra Nath was in no shape to reply.

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Thus it happened that John Robinson returned to Kahu Kotal, whilst Surendra Nath Mukerji, barrister-at-law, set out to return by easy stages to the Sudda Station.

Now it is a curious circumstance, but nevertheless true, that the majority of Pathans are light-fingered. They can hardly help that, poor fellows, since when they are wee babies their mothers perform the curious rite of passing them through a hole in the wall, and praying that Allah will strengthen them in the art of self-help. As the hole in the wall is symbolic of the thief who commits burglary by digging through the mud wall of his neighbour's dwelling, it is not to be wondered that, with such maternal encouragement, the young Pathan flourishes in a community where the cult of theft is considered superior to any other accomplishment. When a Pathan is prepared to steal from a friend it is

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to be expected that he will look upon those whom he schedules as enemies as fair spoil. As Surendra Nath Mukerji, in hiring a local bullock hackney, had intimated his intention of returning directly to the Sudda Station, it was not surprising that four young bloods from the village of Pundaul should lie up on the road for the purpose of undertaking the, to them, perfectly justifiable action of relieving the barrister of all his personal goods that were of value; and out of consideration of the contempt in which they held his race, of severely chastising him with sticks. So it fell out. This gang of young ruffians left the wretched Bengali half dead upon the roadside, and so discouraged him that, when at last he was conveyed to the Sudda Station, he only remained long enough in that frontier township to become sufficiently convalescent to take the train to Lahore. He did not even trouble to leave a farewell message to the magistrate who had held him in such high regard, but shaking the dust of that arid frontier from off his shoes, he returned to the heart of Indian civilisation, and spread such a report of the barbarism and savagery of those parts that John Robinson was able to carry on his despotism, unqueried by too well instructed counsel, until he was moved to a post of greater distinction in the capital of the Province.

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RUSSIA

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IVAN MOSKOVSKI.

THE sound of the midday whistle faltered through the works.

Ivan Moskovski dropped his chisel into the tool-rack and proceeded to carry out his final stop-work duty by turning off the taps on the feed-pipe to the lathe. This, and the handing in of the check of his gang delayed him perhaps three minutes, so that by the time he reached the vestibule and pulled on his skin coat and butcher boots, he was about the last of the workmen to leave the building. Nodding as usual to the *concièrge*, he passed into the biting cold without. A little shivering pale-faced shrimp of a boy was waiting for him. It was the Russian prototype of the Fleet Street gutter newsvendor. This little urchin, who looked in his misery as if he should have been just one large frost-bite, secreted his dirty sheets beneath the rags which enveloped him and intimated the importance of his news by stretching three grimy and shrunken fingers towards the workman's bearded face.

Ivan smiled down on the little miserable atom, saying—

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"What! three kopeks again, thou little blackguard. Have I not already three times this week paid thee three kopeks for the paper that is not worth more than one? Is my gang so well paid and so rich that it can afford to subscribe three kopeks a-day to such a little bag of iniquity as thou?"

"But, Big Ivan, you will be well pleased after you read what is written here. It is all about the increase of your pay." Patting the boy on the head, Ivan drew out a web purse from his waistband and counted out the copper coins, in lieu of which the little newsvendor surrendered a portion of his stock-in-trade.

Big Ivan took the paper and strode through the snow towards the *auberge* where the little group of subscribers to the daily news-sheet collected, that he, the only literate one amongst them, might spell out the outline of the information it contained. To his astonishment, instead of finding only his own particular cronies waiting for him, a vast crowd of workmen was gathered round the door of the beer-house. They were shouldering in like a scrimmage on the football ground in order that they might listen to a man who was addressing them from the doorstep.

As Ivan neared the group a great shout went up.

"Ivan—Big Ivan—Ivan Moskovski will be our deputy. Where is Ivan?" Then, as those on

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the outskirts caught sight of the burly figure, they shouted "Here he is. Make way for Ivan."

Before he quite realised what was wanted of him, the big man was passed through the crowd and found himself face to face with the man who had been addressing the gathering of workmen. The stranger, who was a little dark, thin, pasty-faced man, had long lank hair trailing over his shoulders and the furtive eyes of one who is ever suspicious of his neighbours. He was dressed as a workman, but it was easy to see from the refined lines on his face and the whiteness of the one shapely hand that was ungloved, that he did not belong to the class of men around him; men whose hands were horny and hard from contact with file and hammer.

He was a man of ready speech. In a momentary glance he diagnosed the mental activity of the huge gang-master and, before the slow articulation of the latter could frame a question, had proceeded to unfold the duties which a summary and unanimous election had placed upon Ivan's brawny shoulders.

"You have been selected as the deputy to represent this half of your fellow-workmen in the great petition which is to be presented to the Tsar. It is all arranged. You can write. Therefore you will sign this paper which makes you deputy. To-morrow morning you will join the delegate who represents the other half of your brother workmen in presenting a petition to the

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manager of the works, demanding from him a day's work of eight hours at thirty kopeks an hour. This he will refuse. This is what we want, for then on Sunday you will join the delegates from four hundred other institutions, who are to present a petition at the Winter Palace. Come along inside and sign the paper that makes you deputy."

If it had passed through the slow-thinking mind of Ivan that it would be preferable to make further inquiry into his newly found office, the opportunity for mental argument was not allowed him. In his last sentence the cadaverous stranger appealed, apparently unconsciously, but really with studied rhetoric, to the assembled workmen. They caught his meaning and, amid their cheers of acquiescence, Ivan was hustled into the inn, where, during a confused hubbub, he affixed, on the spot which the stranger indicated, his sprawling signature to a paper. The stranger then embraced him soundly on both cheeks to an uproar of applause the like of which the quaint little tavern had rarely seen, and handed to the new deputy a card upon which was printed the demands he was required to make from his employers; while Ivan was deciphering it for the edification of his comrades, the envoy extraordinary slipped away.

This scene, with its meteor-like result, will seem strange and impossible to those who live in an atmosphere of education which finds the

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street urchin of ten risking his halfpence on the chances of a horse-race perhaps a hundred miles away. It will amaze those who live in a country where the freedom of the press makes equally public the great affairs of State and the little happenings of private life. But in Russia everything is different. Here in this crowd of perhaps four hundred workmen, not more than two or three per cent could scrawl their names upon a paper or decipher the modicum of information which a muzzled press can filter through its columns. Intelligence is not wanting in the masses in Russia. But intelligence must be developed before its working can be turned to rational use. One intelligent and educated man, dropped into the midst of this crowd of simple workmen, was able to put more conviction into one sentence of his harangue than the most able and experienced platform speaker could have effected after an hour's speech with a hall full of American or British working men. The mental capacity of the Russian peasant class has not yet the means to cut a channel for itself. It is like waters in a desert. It can overflow its banks and become exhausted in the immediate desert, but it has to turn to exterior aid for the channel that may conduct its swelling waters to a useful purpose. Therefore the peasant eagerly and blindly follows the first path that intelligence shows. Thus blindly, even though at heart he may have had misgivings, Great Ivan followed

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the dictates of the revolutionary impressionist who, in five short minutes, had created him the leader and spokesman of his fellow-workmen.

The men discussed the situation over their black bread and tea. They had heard rumours that some such movement was on foot. Ivan even now took out his three kopeks' worth of news-sheet and deciphered, for the benefit of those who still surrounded him, references to a coming movement which should better the state of the workmen, which should put an end to the war and relieve them of the extra burden entailed by the support of the wives and children of relatives who had been taken as reservists to the Far East. Skilfully worded, cleverly expressed, these references contained no indication of a desire to call disorder and rebellion to aid the movement. Just simply a mass meeting, which in holiday attire would approach the Little Father, strong in the conviction that he, as soon as he heard their grievances, would set them right.

Again the whistle sounds and the workmen troop back to their lathes and benches. As they pass in, men clap Ivan on the back or nod encouragingly to him. A certain pride begins slowly to develop in the big man's mind. He feels as he returns to his lathe that he is something more than a mere expert with the chisel. The charm of ambition has found its bed. He is better than his fellows. They themselves have recognised this, they have chosen him as their

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representative. By the time that the evening whistle dismissed the shifts, this reasoning had so grown upon Ivan that he left the works determined to show his comrades that he was worthy of the opinion they had so unanimously expressed about him.

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Before returning to his home Ivan turned up a street in which was a little baker's shop which, after work hours, he had lately been in the habit of frequenting. He pushed open the door, and doffing his fur cap, saluted the fat genial baker, who sat in the comfortable heat given off by a preparing oven.

"Sit down, Big Ivan, and tell us the best word."

Ivan divested himself of his fur coat and drew up a stool close to the master baker, but in such a position as to enable him to obtain a full view of the farther end of the shop, where three girls, with bare arms, were engaged in wrestling with a mass of coarse dough.

"There! there!" said the baker, "it is not me that you come to see, it is the lazy wench Olga over there. She must keep to it to-night, for we have an order for white bread from one of the best houses. They do say that the big bakers are going to stop work."

"They are not the only people who are going to stop work," suggested the gross Ivan with that mysterious leer which the ignorant affect when they hold information they cannot contain.

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"How so! how so! Great Ivan?" queried the baker as he handed a packet of *papyros* to his visitor. Ivan slowly and laboriously unfolded the news from the works, not forgetting to dilate upon the importance of his new denomination, and watching from a corner of his eye for such effect as his narrative might have on the girl who studiously kept her back towards him. He himself saw nothing except those broad shoulders with the double plait of yellow hair hanging across them, but the evident elation of her companions showed him that his pains were not wasted.

"How so! how so! Great Ivan? but if the manager should refuse, what will ye then?" This was the crucial point. Ivan lumbered up from his stool and, towering up to the full height of his six feet, with a deliberation that was a crude effort at theatrical delivery, made answer—

"Then Ivan the Delegate will go with the others to the Winter Palace on Sunday."

The two plaits and the broad shoulders swung round at this statement, discovering a pair of blue eyes and a round face beaming with pride.

"Then I will go with you."

"Tush! what is the matter with the girl: go on with thy bread," and the master baker was playfully severe with his daughter.

"I will not do any more bread to-night."

The girl began defiantly to wipe the dough

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from her fingers and hands. "I am going to walk home with Ivan."

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It is evident that something unusual is taking place in the city. The absence of sleighs and sleigh-drivers on both the Vasalievski and Petersburg Ostrof is sufficient indication that the great concourse of people thronging the streets in these two islands is more than a normal gathering of Sunday worshippers. Tidily dressed men, holiday caparisoned women and countless children are standing about the pavements, drifting backwards and forwards with an indecisive movement. Presently a general tacit inclination seems to take these gathered hundreds southwards. One group gathers and multiplies in the Troitskaya Place until in half an hour the open space in front of the park gates is packed so tightly that it can hold no more, and the thickening crowd heaps up along the various thoroughfares concentrating towards the Troitskaya Bridge.

A spectator, if he had climbed to the roof of St Peter and St Paul, would have seen that a crowd, to all intents similar to the one in the Troitskaya Place, was also gathering in front of the Zoological Museum, at the head of the Palace bridge; that it had overflowed into the open space where a few days previously the guns had been in battery which had caused the sensation at the blessing of the Neva. Here hundreds of the crowd had mushroomed out on to the

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frozen surface of that river. And even farther away along the Admiralty quay was visible the head of another concourse of the people.

It was the climax of the workmen's trouble. To-day they would put their grievances before the one man in Russia who could not, who would not, fail them. The delegates of labour would petition the Great White Czar. Already the processions are forming which are to carry the voice of a suppliant people to the Winter Palace. We will join the concourse now moving down the Troitskaya Bridge. In the lead are men that are more than mechanics and peasants. Here we even find youths in the uniform of students, also a sprinkling of Popes; and in the first ranks there are as many women as men. But the majority are artisans, and many carry in their hands symbols of the submissive nature of their mission. Well in front are two large portraits of the Little Father and his Consort. Let us elbow our way forward. In the second rank, clearing the way with his broad shoulders for one of the portrait-bearers, is Ivan Moskovski, and hanging to his left arm, with both hands clasped, is the master baker's daughter. Ivan is dressed in his Sabbath garments, and to increase his dignity he has purchased a new peaked cap. Olga too has taken extra care with her toilet, and is radiant after the manner of her age and station.

The head of this procession has now reached

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the Marble Palace. Here it is checked for a moment by the action of half a dozen gendarmes, who sullenly turn their backs to the crowd and push it back. The action is necessary, as a regiment of infantry is marching along the quay. The crowd obeys the summons of law and order good-naturedly enough, and the leaders laugh and joke with the passing soldiers, recognising friends and, it may be, relatives in their ranks. Little then did they realise what would be the attitude of those brown-coated infantry towards them within the short space of half an hour. The last company has passed and the gendarmes allow the head of the procession into the thoroughfare again. It marches down the Admiralty quay, behind the Winter Palace, until it mingles with the head of the similar crowd that has crossed the Neva by the Palace bridge. There is perhaps five minutes delay while the moving spirits attempt to marshal the delegates, and then the masses from behind impel the leaders into the opening in front of the Winter Palace.

There is no portion of Peter the Great's capital that is more imposing than this, the main approach to the Winter Palace. The great open court which separates the entrance of the handsome dull-red royal mansion from the Foreign Office is three inches deep with snow; the giant column of Alexander I. is also wound in the white of winter weather. The crowd of petitioners moves into the snow-carpeted piazza

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from the west and there halts instinctively. The far side of the opening is partitioned off. This partition is a solid phalanx of brown-clothed infantry, fringed with a line of glistening bayonets.

Near the Imperial entrance stands a group of mounted officers with their light-grey coats buttoned up to their throats, while above and beyond the glistening bayonets of the halted infantry is a sotnia of cavalry.

The crowd halts instinctively. It had come in peace, but the true atmosphere of the Palace environment is war. The halt of the people is but momentary, for the throng behind, flooding westward, forces the leaders towards the glistening barrier. One wonders if the Father of this people is standing at one of the many windows that light his magnificent Palace. For of a truth, if this people ever wanted a father it is at this very moment. One of the grey-coated officers at the portico raises his hand, a subordinate beside him presses spurs to his horse's flanks and gallops to the far end of the grizzly phalanx. As the snow flies in showers from his horse's hoofs, a command is given in guttural tones. The line of bayonets flashes downwards, and the click of breech-bolts splutters up and down the line.

Where is the Father of this people now? Why does he not come forward? A single word to an aide-de-camp, one brief appearance at a window,

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and Nicholas might have planted himself in the hearts of his people more proudly, more firmly than ever his forebears had done before him. One moment only and then the opportunity had passed. A man from the crowd in the garb of a priest springs forward into the open, a crucifix in one hand, a roll of parchment in the other. Three or four spring after him. Whether to support or restrain him none can ever say, for at that moment the same grey-coated officer at the portico raises his arm and a volley crashes out. Before the walls of the Palace have given back the reverberation there is another crashing volley and then another. A wail of despair wells up from the stricken crowd and rises into a shriek of horror, terror, and anger. Hoarse cries of rage, the shrieks of terrified women, the screams of lacerated sufferers. In a moment, that which had been a peaceful, loyal gathering becomes an unholy, terrified mob, and breaks back and back from the presence of the man who has betrayed it, leaving behind it a mutilated, pitiful trail in the snow. As it bursts its way out from the zone of butchery, volley after volley is poured into it. Men with the blaze of fear and anger mingled in their eyes shout, "There is no Tsar. There is no Little Father." Of a truth the Great White Tsar has bartered his birthright.

At the first discharge Olga clung screaming to Great Ivan's coat. Even his dull wits were

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sharpened by the proximity of danger. He seized Olga in his arms, lifting her up and, trusting to his great weight, by sheer strength pushed a channel through the stampeding crowd. The girl threw her arms round his neck gasping in terror.

"Quiet, Olga, quiet; in a moment we shall be free," he whispered hoarsely in her ear, and, as if obedient to his summons, the girl gave a shudder and then lay limply in his arms. As he pushed his way to the Admiralty quay he heard the bullets whistling overhead, even heard them tearing their way through the ranks of his associates with that sickening thud which must be heard to be understood. Olga's head was against his neck, and for the moment, in the heat of his endeavour to extricate himself from the terror-stricken mass, he thought that she was crying in her fear, for he felt the hot tears upon his cheek. Wait! were they tears? Could even woman weep so copiously as this? He put up his hand and drew it back; it was red with blood. A horrible thought crossed his mind. He was now round the corner, and for the moment safe from the pitiless bullets.

"It's all right now, Olga, you can stand here safely," and he essayed to place her on her feet. Inert she sank to the ground, Her yellow hair was bathed in blood. Already the colour of life had given place on her cheeks to the pallor of death.

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The crowd raced by, their eyes full of horror; they had no time to waste on this minor tragedy against the Admiralty walls. For a second Great Ivan stood rigid and motionless beside the dead body of his Olga. Suddenly the full significance of the calamity dawned upon him, and he dropped to his knees and endeavoured to make her hear. Again the roar of the terror-stricken crowd filled his ears, but he turned his head neither to right or left.

"The Cossacks! the Cossacks! Escape! escape!" and with frenzied activity the crowd sought to disperse. Down thundered a troop of cavalrymen; they overrode all and sundry in their way. The air was as alive with the lashes of whips as five minutes ago it had been with the sound of bullets. Ivan never looked up, even though a cruel, lead-loaded thong cut deep into the muscles of his back: he never moved. . . .

A month later, when the police were examining the assassin who had done the Prefect of Police to death, they discovered, when they stripped him, that there was a half-healed Nagaika weal right across his back.

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A SIDE-ISSUE.

A HEAVY autumn mist hung over the kloof, the fleecy vaporous cloud showing partiality to the deeper levels. Great arms and offshoots from it clung indecisively to the mountain-sides, reflecting as deathly white the silver wallow of the dying moon. In the treacherous semi-light the kloof appeared like some deep crater of volcanic origin; the mist within, in its sheeny whiteness, might well have been dread sulphurous vapour generated in the bowels of the earth. The hour—it was well past midnight—added to the uncanny feeling bred of chilly and uncertain night. As it topped the lip of the kloof, the head of the dismounted column instinctively came to a standstill, and the squadron leader motioned the tame Burgher to his side.

"This is the top of the nek—where is the farm? I can see nothing through this haze!"

The tame Burgher leaned over until his mouth was close against the officer's ear, and whispered, "It is all right—the farm is just at the bottom of the path before us. It is easy to surround it now!"

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Still dissatisfied, the squadron leader beckoned to the Intelligence Officer, and instituted for the fifth time that night a searching inquiry into the antecedents of the guide. The assurance was again satisfactory, and resulted in a forward move. Like ghosts the shadowy figures of forty men passed between the boulders which capped the pass, and disappeared down the hillside. Not altogether in silence, for no matter the circumstances, forty men scrambling down an uncertain path upon a pitch-dark night must cause some noise. Iron-shod boots slip and clang against the fellow-metal of the granite. And when the barrel of a rifle is so cold that it seems to burn the hand, butts will strike protruding rocks, or clatter, as involuntarily a slipping man struggles to re-secure his foothold. The misery of those night-marches! The biting cold of the veldt-bred breeze, —a cold which neither coat, "warm-British," cardigan, nor woollen vest can defeat,—cold that lives during the monotony of the march, to vanish when the first shot breaks the weary tension of the quest. The defiling line seemed endless: the noise, to nerves which are taut as 'cello-strings, would seem to increase rather than diminish. Surely such a hubbub would wake the dead! If there is a Burgher within a mile, he must by this be all attention! Ah, here is the last, and the rear ten files halt on the col, until the little subaltern told off for the purpose distributes them along the ridge. The men fling themselves down wearily,

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and Tommy-like, commence to blow their fingers in an endeavour to bring back circulation to the perished extremities. With muffled whispers the subaltern corrects the placing of his men, some to face this way, others that, and returns to the col to keep solitary vigil with his troop-sergeant. What would he not give to smoke! As he peers into the darkness, deepening at the approach of dawn, the footsteps of his descending comrades strike fainter and fainter upon the ear. A murmur — and then the sound is merged with the other noises of silent night. None but a sentry can appreciate this paradox, can know how noisy and yet how still and silent night can be.

It is all part of a preconcerted plan. Two columns are surrounding a parallelogram of kopje, which is known to be the home of a small but truculent commando. Each earth and run is to be stopped during the night, and then the main body of one column will draw the parallelogram from end to end. The war is fading to a close, and in evidence of this, information comes readily and freely. The possibility of a final issue has realised a crop of mean Iscariots. They would hedge against the future estate, which can only now be a matter of weeks. Call them what you may — National Scouts, Intelligence Guides, or Burgher Police — they are Iscariots still, ready to sell the lives and bodies of their brothers for the price they will fetch in gold and the good

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offices of the conqueror. And well this night have they done their work. The stops have been led up mountain paths, which required no picketing when treachery was not within the compass of the sleepers' calculation.

The squadron leader had been told off to surround a farm within the precincts of the parallelogram — a farm at which it was said the local commandant was wont to sleep. It was opined that the capture of this commandant would greatly simplify the forthcoming operation, and a specially selected squadron was detailed to accompany the tame Burgher. The special instructions to the squadron commander were, that having picketed the path by which he found his way into the inner sanctity of the Boer position, he was to capture the inmates of the farm, and if practicable to hold some position in the inner valley until the operations destined for the morrow developed. The Intelligence Officer from the column also accompanied the band of raiders, for the purpose of exercising a gentle control over the tame Burgher.

Three officers, the Iscariot and a Kaffir, groped their way down through the mist at the head of the column. Progress was slow; but as they sank into the lower levels a more distinct path presented itself, and when they ceased to descend and met the plain, they found they were through the more opaque body of the mist. An indistinct mass loomed up in front of them. Iscariot and

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the Kaffir enjoined silence — it was evident that the raiders had reached their goal. The squadron had been selected for its knowledge of the part desired of it. The night-raiding of farmsteads was to them no new sensation. Much practice had made them expert. A few muffled whispers —a short reconnaissance by the squadron commander and the Intelligence Officer—and then with bated breath the orders were put in circulation. Ten minutes were allowed for section leaders to post their men, and then the two senior officers and Iscariot walked up to the *stoep*, knowing that the sergeant-major had the rear secure, and that men were prepared at every window and outhouse.

There was just a moment of suspense — that moment which quickens the pulse of the boldest, and tightens the nerves even of the veteran steeped in war. The moment the leader raises his hand to knock for admittance at the door, every ear is strained, for though the eye cannot see, yet the nerves can feel the blow that must come.

Rat-tat-tat! Rat-tat-tat!

The hand closes more tightly on the rifle. The finger seeks the trigger. In a moment we may be engaged in the sternest measure meted out to mortal man. Yet there is no sound: the silence is ominous, It may mean that the enemy is prepared, and that the countermine is laid.

Rat-tat-tat!

The second summons is even more peremptory

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than the first. There is a movement in the interior. A half-closed shutter shows the glimmer of a light. The door creaks. The wooden bolt shoots back. Now—— "Hands up!" Back swings the upper half of the double door. "Hands up!"

What need of the threat implied in that hoarse command—what need of murderous weapons and brutal gesture? The door flies back, but to disclose a shrinking maiden, whose trembling hand can scarcely hold the home-made rushlight. Half-dressed, dazed by the suddenness of the awakening, terrified by the apparition of armed men and levelled rifles, the child shrinks back. Her mute terror should have moved the trespassers. But there was no time for sentiment. The maid is brushed aside, the candle seized from her hand, and in a moment the search is commenced.

A door half opened—it would have banged to again, but the squadron commander's foot barred the way. He might have spared himself the trouble,—the house was empty but for women. A mother and three daughters. Simultaneously the outhouses were searched. Once there was a scuffle and a stir. In a moment the invaders placed themselves on the alert defensive. A Kaffir had tried to break through the cordon. It was all over in a moment—it did not matter to him now, whether he had sought to carry information or, in blind terror, had hoped to save his skin.

In five minutes the Intelligence Officer was

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satisfied that the draw was blank; while he set himself to examine the women, the squadron commander, in consultation with his subaltern, posted his men against such developments as daylight might have in store for them.

The main approach to the homestead lay through an avenue of pointed gum-trees. A hundred yards of avenue, and then the path, zigzagging like a sheep-track, worked up a slow incline, until it was lost in an under-feature of the higher ground. At the moment the darkness and fleecy mist disguised all this; but the squadron was expert in night dispositions. The avenue was evident; its proximity and the usual kraals and farm enclosures gave exceptional cover, and in a few minutes the squadron commander was satisfied that with a little daylight he could hold his own. He returned to the farm. Already the Intelligence Officer was on easy terms with the inmates. A lamp had been lighted, while the lady of the house and her daughters, half-dressed as they were, were busying themselves in a hospitable endeavour to make a brew of coffee. The light of the lamp showed that it was a home of more than ordinary refinement. Crude, dingy, and heavy perhaps from an English point of view; but homely and luxurious as Dutch houses are assessed in South Africa.

English was spoken as if it were the natural tongue, and considering the incongruity of the hour and the nature of the visit, both trespassers

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and occupants seemed upon the best of terms. Nor were the young ladies, as they flitted from shelf to table in their hospitable endeavour, averse to the blandishments of their unbidden guests. The straight-limbed young Englishmen seemed to find favour in their eyes. But of the tame Burgher they would have nothing. He, knowing nothing of the craft which we call deference to the weaker sex, pressed his good offices in a manner which called forth a quick admonition from his superiors, and loosed the tongue-strings of the youngest of the girls. In a moment the maiden was up in arms. Her blue eyes deepened in colour, her bosom heaved, and forsaking or forgetting the borrowed tongue, she burst forth in the *taal*—

"You mean creature! You hound of a 'hands-upper'! you dare to lay a finger on me, and I will turn you over to these Englishmen, who hate and despise you as much as we do. *You* in karki!—an English officer can look nice in it, but a *verdomde* 'hands-upper' looks no better than a Kaffir. You bring the English here that they may kill our people,—kill our fathers, brothers, and cousins, and then think that we will meet you as men. Have we not a brother on the Berg, whom to-morrow you will try and shoot? If he was a 'hands-upper' such as you, I would never hold up my head again. You spy! I would sooner a Kaffir touched me than you—*Voetsak!*"[1]

[1] *Voetsak!* Dutch, "Get out!" used to dogs and Kaffirs.

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The tame Burgher withered under the lash of that fair tongue. Stung to retaliation, he made the intimidating step which had given birth to the culminating epithet. The squadron commander, a man of few words but deliberate action, ranged himself beside the girl, and motioned Iscariot to a corner of the room.

The incident was past. But it had been instructive. English and Dutch may blend together, and the granulation of time may heal the sore; but the partisan feeling that has arisen between prudence and patriotism is a far more deeply seated cancer. It will fester afresh when nothing of the first great sore remains.

The coffee was passed round, and the Intelligence Officer, seeing an opportunity in the recent outburst, crossed the room and sat beside the angry child.

"Where is your brother?" he asked.

"On the Berg waiting for daylight, where every true Burgher who is not a coward should be!" and the girl tossed her shapely head angrily towards the guide.

"Well, I hope that he will surrender quietly to-morrow."

"Surrender!—my brother become a 'hands-upper'!—you do not know my brother: he has fought from the very beginning, and will fight to the bitter end. We would sooner see him dead than——"

The squadron commander had walked across

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to the window: already the black of night was softening behind the Berg, and the great saw-edged outline of the crest stood out from the indefinite haze of night. For a period the gloom in the valley deepened and, as the night sky melted into grey and the grey grew tinged with crimson, day asserted itself with that abruptness peculiar to the veldt. The mists of night disentangled themselves from the barren hillsides, and all was clear. The squadron commander shaded his eyes, and without remark cast loose his glasses. For a moment he was intent, then he beckoned the Intelligence Officer to his side. Something was moving on the hillside. The light seemed to strengthen with spasmodic jerks. Beyond the avenue a white path zigzagged up the mountain-side. Upon the path was a horseman. He was rapidly descending, and it was now easy to see that he led a spare horse with him.

The squadron commander turned round abruptly. The four women had risen to their feet. They had anticipated events, and could ill conceal their agitation. In a short breath the orders were given: "Kingsly, you remain here and look after these ladies. Not a soul moves to the window-side of the room. We will nab that fellow." The tame Burgher and the Intelligence Officer proceeded to follow the squadron leader to the back entrance of the house. In a second the maid who had shown such spirit was at the

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Intelligence Officer's side—she caught his sleeve: "He is my brother. You must not shoot—you must give him 'hands-up'!" In a moment she ceased to be the steadfast, unrelenting patriot, and was a woman and sister—just such a loving, timorous woman and sister as there are many thousands in this country to-day.

"Of course he will have 'hands-up'!" and the Intelligence Officer was through the door, bolting it behind him.

The squadron sergeant-major was picked up at the door, and the nearest men in hiding in the avenue warned. The order was passed round that no one was to fire—the man was to be made a prisoner. The two officers, the tame Burgher and the sergeant-major, with their carbines at the ready, stooped behind a rough hedgerow.

Presently the drumming of hoofs was audible, then the sound of whistling. The youth was whistling merrily in the exhilaration of new-found day. Gaily down the path he came, returning home after his night of picket duty, as he had done a hundred times before. He was level with the hedge. "Hands up!" The four levelled carbines were almost at the horses' noses. They started back and snorted in alarm. But their terror was nothing in comparison with that depicted on the face of the Burgher. He was a boy of perhaps two-and-twenty, and even in the short second of the encounter the likeness to his sisters was ridiculously apparent. Half of their

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own accord, half by an impulse of self-preservation on the part of their rider, the horses swung round. Lying flat on their necks, the boy sought safety in flight.

"You fool! Hands up!" shouted the squadron leader. "Hands up, or we shoot!" And he fired his weapon into the ground. But it was no use, the horses were now into their stride.

"Fool!" said the squadron commander as he jerked in the bolt of his carbine. "We must shoot!"

Four rifles spoke. The body lying on the necks of the horses swayed sideways, and then slid to the ground, bringing one of the horses to its knees, and checking the flight of both.

"I've killed him!" and there was a ring of piteous regret in the squadron commander's voice.

We turned the body over. We had all killed him, for the four bullets had taken effect, and each must have been a fatal wound. There he lay dead, upon the very threshold of the home which had known him from childhood. Shot down before his mother's eyes. We carried him in. What more could we do? And we offered to dig a grave. Mother and sisters received their dead with stoical self-restraint. But as they removed the handkerchief from the fair young face, the youngest burst into tears.

"Oh, why did you not 'hands-up' him?" came the piteous wail.

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Boom! boom! boom! The sound of guns reverberated down the valley. The day's work had begun. The drive had commenced, and we had to leave the stricken family with its dead and its grief. Yet the memory of that day was to haunt some of us for weeks. For of such incidents is made up the tale of war, which men call glorious.

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ON THE ROAD TO STELLENBOSCH!

(*Five pages out of the Note-book of the Intelligence Officer.*)

WITH R——

"A little ready wit is more valuable to a soldier than a Staff College diploma."

THEY caught him in a kloof. His pony's pastern had been smashed by a bullet, and so he couldn't get away. He was a mean type of manhood. Ill-clad, unwashed, emaciated, and cadaverous. So thin that when he lay flat—*ventre-à-terre*—the close-cropped grass of a sheep-run was cover for him. A wretched creature, but strong enough to release the pull of a Mauser. Miserable thought! this mean, filthy, unsocked specimen may have accounted for the lives of the very best that England can breed. They brought him before the Major.

The Major looked the faltering wretch up and down for a moment. No doubt thoughts identical with ours crossed his mind.

"What is your name?" It came like a pom-pom shell, and the prisoner nearly jumped out of his *veld-schoen*.

"Piet Van de Merwe!"

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"Of where?"

"Trichardtsfontein!"

"Oh ho!" continued the Major, ostentatiously opening a notebook, and turning to a page which, if the prisoner could have seen, he would have found to be blank "—Piet Van de Merwe, of Trichardtsfontein. Let me see: Jan Kock, Daniel Smit, Piet Coëtze, Gert Liebenberg—yes, here we are, Piet Van de Merwe, of Trichardtsfontein, train-wrecker and murderer of wounded. Take him away and tie him to that waggon-wheel. He will be shot in half an hour!"

The worst that this mean white had expected was a pass to return to his farm, the signing of some meaningless oath, and his promise not to fight again. But to be shot! His jaw dropped, and the few hairs which composed his embryo beard stood stiff upon his chin.

The guard hustled him away, and as they tied him to the wheel he ventured, "Is it true?" "True! You just wait five-and-twenty minutes. You will be the ninth we have shot this morning. See that yellow flag over there and that new-turned earth? That's where we have buried them." The mean white nearly collapsed. A sentry paced up and down in front of him, halted every five minutes beside him, and indicated the hour upon his watch.

"Ten minutes more!" The mean white began to whimper.

"Look here," said the sentry, "have you any

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information? Our Major doesn't often change his mind, but perhaps if you told him what your commando's plans are he might—well, he—— You have only eight minutes more!"

"Yes, yes, I know everything. I will tell, only don't shoot me, I can't bear it. I never fought to be shot!"

"How do I know that you are telling the truth?"

"De Wet is going to Wittenbergen. I swear——"

"All right, come and swear to the Major!"

. . . . . .

Not only did the mean white truthfully give the whole show away, but he volunteered to go out and bring in more exact and recent information.

"Mind, I have your name in my book. You will never have another chance!" said the Major.

Away went the mean white; moreover, he was back again in twelve hours with circumstantial and accurate information. You know how narrowly the Free State Government escaped capture. This is how it all came about!

THE IMPREGNABLE LINE OF POSTS.

The officer commanding the centre section of the defensive line between Taba N'chu and Bloemfontein walked into the mess-tent rubbing his hands. "I think that we have fixed

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them now!" said he, waving the correspondent to a seat at his right hand. "We have a post every three thousand yards, and the whole distance from here to Boesman's Kop has been linked up with double strands of barbed wire. Not a man, sir, not a man could get through. And if they attempt to force it, I have every post connected with the telephone. I should know in five minutes, and then we should just give them fits. No more Springhaan's Neks, my boy!"

And after dinner the correspondent sent a telegram. He told the world that this particular section of the defensive line was impregnable.

. . . . . .

A flying column had encamped eighteen miles from Taba N'chu, and at eleven o'clock at night the officer in command was seized with an idea. He wrote a despatch, and sent his brigade-major down to the colonel of his one cavalry regiment with the request that he would send up an officer and have three men ready to ride into Taba N'chu at once.

A little subaltern boy was told off, and duly presented himself at headquarters.

"I want you," said the column commander, "to ride with this letter into Taba N'chu and deliver it to the O.C. troops there. Now you will probably have some difficulty, as you will have to avoid two things: the enemy, who are somewhere on our left front, and the Taba N'chu

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line. You will probably be shot if you stumble across either. Now, look at the map."

The map was thoroughly explained, and then the column commander took the boy outside and initiated him into the mysteries of a South African sky and the Southern Cross.

So, with a hazy idea of keeping the lower pointer athwart his left shoulder, and the Spitzkop on his right front, the youth set out to deliver, "without fail," his missive before daybreak.

. . . . . .

"My boy!" said the officer in command at Taba N'chu to the correspondent as they both sat down to an early breakfast, "you should have been up last night. Those beggars tried to force my line, but it was just as I told you, they were driven off with loss. Read that!" and he passed him a telegram.

"From the O.C. Springhaan's Nek to the O.C. Taba N'chu. 2.15 A.M. Enemy just made determined attack on the lines (stop). Glad to report were easily driven back (stop). Am standing to arms till daybreak in anticipation of second attempt (stop). Must have been a commando of about fifty (stop). Will report if we did any execution in the morning (message ends)."

"Excellent, excellent!" said the correspondent, pluming himself on his foresight in sending his telegram of the previous evening.

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Just as he spoke in walked a very tired, hot, and dishevelled little subaltern of horse, who handed the O.C. Taba N'chu a despatch. "Where have you come from?" asked the O.C. as he broke the seal. "Sit down and have some breakfast."

"I have come from Jammersberg Pan," said the subaltern as he accepted the invitation with alacrity.

"Jammersberg Pan?" and the O.C. dropped the despatch. "You must have come fast to have got here so early."

"Not fast, sir; it has taken me all night!"

"Whichever way did you come? Were you not stopped by my defence posts?"

"No, was never stopped. Somebody fired a few shots at me over by the Spit koppies, and there was a devil of a lot of wire, which we had to cut. But they scuttled away as we rode over the nek, and here I am!"

"Impossible!" gasped the O.C. "You can only have come over Springhaan's Nek, and you could not have got past there. Weren't you challenged?"

"Yes, I think some one challenged when we were over the nek. I thought they were Boers, and did not wait. They fired a lot after we had passed."

"Impossible, impossible!" rejoined the O.C. as he took a telephonic message from an orderly.

Then he added, "Young man, you have had a

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narrow escape of being shot or captured. Listen to this: 'From O.C. Springhaan's Nek to O.C. Taba N'chu. 6.50 A.M. Have investigated the marks left by the enemy (stop). They must have been about a hundred strong (stop). They succeeded in cutting the wire, and two or three may have sneaked through (stop). From the disturbed appearance of the grass they must have dragged their wounded away (message ends).' I cannot think which way you came or how you missed being embroiled. I must report this success to headquarters at once."

. . . . . .

The correspondent said nothing; he was thinking that he would have to hedge somewhat with regard to the impregnability of the Taba N'chu-Bloemfontein line.

A TRUE STORY OF AN ARMOURED TRAIN.

"Sergeant, you will be in command of the train. I shall be on the verandah of the farm over there. If anything untoward happens turn on the search-light and I will return at once. I shall hear when '23 up' passes the siding."

"Very good, sir."

The officer in charge of armoured train No. 27 jumped from the footboard of his saloon and dived into the darkness of the veld. He was a subaltern who had been wounded at Mooiplaats,

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and since his convalescence had commanded No. 27—the "Coffee Cooler," as the men were pleased to call their rolling fortress. No. 27 had now been on this section of the line for some time, escorting troop and supply trains. Incidentally the officer in command had discovered the best farms at which to buy eggs, milk, and butter. But as he steered his steps towards a neat little homestead nestling against an underfeature of Free State kopje, some two hundred yards from the siding where he had anchored his command for the night, he was not quite sure whether eggs and bacon were the only attractions. He had not followed the main road to the farm. Previous acquaintance with the locality had taught him that there was a more direct route. A Kaffir path led round the confines of a water dam, to where a small wicket gate barred the approach to the plantation which enclosed the farmhouse. The subaltern knew the path well, and evinced no surprise when he saw the white of a Dutch *kapje* showing against the darker shades of the plantation background. In fact he expected to see it there, since he knew that the Jooste family must have seen his train come in. The owner of the *kapje* was leaning over the wicket; it was too dark to see her face, but light enough to discern the slight and graceful lines of her form.

"Good evening, Chris. How good——!"

"Ssh-h, you must not speak so loud; please,

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please go back to your train!" There was no mistaking the earnest appeal in those few words, expressed in the mincing tones of the pretty Afrikander tongue.

"What is it, Chris?"

"Oh, go—go back. I am an Afrikander girl; I cannot tell you why—only take this—eat it to-night!" As she pressed the parcel into his hand a great finger of white light cleft the shade of the plantation, quivered a moment and disappeared. It was the search-light signal. For a second the features of the girl stood revealed. A round fresh face, a mass of fair, waving hair, and eyes—eyes of that blue so common among the Dutch. The subaltern should have learned much in the brief life of that limelight beam—much that it is often good for a man to learn. The great round eyes were filled with tears, the face was deathly pale. "Eat it to-night." The subaltern retraced his steps with this soft injunction ringing in his ears. In a few minutes he was back with his train.

"What is it, sergeant?"

"Orders, sir. 'Twenty-three up' is detained, and we are to patrol up to Bloemfontein at once."

"All right; tell the driver and call the pickets in!"

The subaltern climbed into his saloon and examined his parcel. It only contained a little cake—a crude dough-nut sprinkled with currants.

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But he thought of the fingers which had kneaded it, and was content.

"Wilson," he said to his servant, "we are going on at once. Don't trouble about dinner; send me some food into the fore-battery!" As he put on his greatcoat the subaltern slipped the gift-cake into his pocket.

. . . . . .

The moon was up. Number 27 armoured train, like some weird monster, was gliding along at six miles an hour. The subaltern, with a great fur rug all round him, sat bunched up in the fore-battery with his eyes glued on the parallel of metals in front of him. On either hand stood his watch, studying the approaches to the line on right and left. Terrible work, this night patrolling. You sit or stand a few feet above the permanent way, watching for such small sign —ruffled gravel, dislodged ballast or misplaced sleeper—as the train-wrecker has left behind him. You know that everything depends upon your vigilance—the safety of the train, the lives of its garrison. You know that if you fail to detect the work of the dynamitard you yourself are as good as a dead man, and that your comrades will be mutilated with you. The passage of each culvert is an agony, each roll of the train is an alarm. Death ever stares you in the face. The tension is such that the strongest nerves will break down after a few weeks on a bad section of the line.

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"Here, sergeant, take my place, I must rest my eyes!"

The subaltern leaned back against the armoured wall of the truck. He remembered the cake, and took it out of his pocket, toyed with it a moment and then broke it in half. A little slip of paper fluttered from it and fell at his feet. He picked it up, and then, thinking it passing strange, lit a match and read, written in a girlish hand, "Don't cross Kaal Spruit to-night."

"Where are we, sergeant?" He was on his feet in a second.

"Just about to cross Kaal Spruit, sir!"

A spring to the communicator. The dial ticked "Stop." Two more vigorous pulls. "Full steam astern," and as the brakes closed on the wheel-shafts the fore-battery was three feet from the culvert.

"Down men, down for your lives!" yelled the subaltern. The train was under way; slowly it backed, and then, as the pistons began to feel the steam-pressure, came the explosion. The bogie swung and rocked with the concussion, great pieces of masonry struck its armoured plates, but it kept the rails.

"Saved by a yard, sir," said the sergeant. "That was an observation mine: we shall have a hot time getting out of this!"

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ANOTHER TRUE HISTORY.

The Intelligence Officer in Bloemfontein was determined that he would catch Brand. Commandant Brand, son of the late President Brand, was an everlasting thorn in his side. For twelve long months had he marked him down. Now at Koffyfontein, now at Fauresmith, now at Petrusburg. Then across the line to Dewetsdorp—back again to Jagersfontein and Philippolis. But although the Intelligence Officer at Bloemfontein always considered his information infallible, yet Brand was just as infallible in evading the columns which were directed against him. In parenthesis —I wonder if the Intelligence Officer at Bloemfontein ever realised that his chief subordinate was Brand's blood relation, or that there is a carrier pigeon-post connected with Bloemfontein? No, I presume he did not know, or, if he did know, did not take notice of these trifles; though these same trifles cost this country a powerful lot of money.

Well, Brand was marked down. He was in laager at Aasvogel Kop. (It wasn't Aasvogel Kop, but for the purposes of this sketch Aasvogel Kop will suffice.) The Intelligence Officer had two mobile columns within reach; the one was six miles north of Aasvogel Kop, the other six miles to the south. That of the north was a column of Irregulars, that of the south composed mostly

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of Regulars and Yeomen. The Intelligence Officer informed both columns of their proximity with Brand, but he failed to inform either column of the existence of the other. The pigeon-post informed Brand of the proximity of both columns before the columns even had heard of his whereabouts. He wasted no time, and Aasvogel Kop knew him no more. But the columns, the one from the north, the other from the south, advanced upon Aasvogel Kop by stealth and night-march. At daybreak they were within fifteen hundred yards of each other, with Aasvogel Kop lying midway between them. And each believing that the other was Brand, the two columns fell upon each other. The officer commanding the Regulars extended his men and debouched into the open. There he gave the order "Gallop!" and 300 mounted men obeyed the order. This was more than the Irregulars could stand. They said among themselves, "These Boers are developing new tactics; we are few, we must save ourselves," and by right of their fresher and better-fed horses they saved themselves. But they left their "pom-pom" behind them, so that it fell into the hands of the southern column. And there were no casualties on either side. The northern column reported that they had unmasked Brand with 500 men—that he had been too strong for them—that the "pom-pom" had unfortunately stuck in a donga, but that it had

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been rendered unserviceable by the gallantry of Private Smith. The southern column reported that they had discovered Brand — inflicted great losses upon him — captured a "pom-pom" from him in most serviceable condition—that his losses were unknown, since the Boers, following their invariable custom, had carried their casualties away with them. And it was only when they brought the "pom-pom" into Bloemfontein that the truth was discovered.

Brand, sitting on the top of a neighbouring hill with his twenty-five men, profited by the experience.

AS IT CONCERNS A SERGEANT OF THE INFERNAL LIGHT HORSE.

The General held decided views on war. He also held decided views on many other subjects, and when the Boers who were besieging him chose to consider the Sabbath as an off-day, he willingly fell in with their views. Not that you could find on that day within the lines any relaxation from the ordinary military precautions of the defence. In fact the only difference which was visibly perceptible lay with the General himself. On that day those who were privileged to see him, and they were generally few, found that he himself had laid aside the panoply of war, and reclined in his headquarter office in a suit

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of light grey flannels, and if he thought it necessary to go out, replaced his brass-bound shako with a soft felt hat of questionable design.

Now one Sabbath morning the General, who was as dear an old gentleman as ever commanded a beleaguered force in a besieged town, awoke to find himself possessed of an idea. Such an unusual circumstance could not be made common property all at once; so, arrayed in his civilian "slacks," he evaded his staff, and, shrouded in the morning mists, sought the confines of his outer perimeter.

It so chanced that he traced his steps to a portion of the defences which were held by a picket of the Infernal Light Horse, a corps noted rather for its sterling soldierly qualities than for politeness to ancient vagrants caught roaming within the precincts of its lines. As the mist cleared the General stood discovered within ten paces of the spot where the sergeant of the picket and one of his men were vainly trying to coax a Flanders kettle to boil.

"Hullo, who are you?" challenged the sergeant when he noticed the figure in grey flannel.

"Good morning!" nodded the General, smiling benignly.

Now a refractory fire and a stubborn camp-kettle do not improve the tempers of pickets on misty mornings, and the sergeant answered curtly, "What are you doing here? Where's your pass?"

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The General still smiled sweetly as he said, "I have no pass!"

"Oh, haven't you? Then you must have lost your way. Going to the head laager to church, I suppose? Here, Jenkins, clap a guard over old Oom Paul here!"

"But, my good man, do you not know me? I am the General Officer commanding this garrison!"

"General Orficer commanding! You're a pretty figure to call yourself a general orficer; General Joubert, I should say. Now none of your slim tricks here, my lad. You just fall in beside Jenkins; he'll take you to church in town instead of in the laager."

"Really, really, my man, I *am* the General. You *must* know me!" said the General with alarm.

"Oh yes, I know you and all the rest like you. I've not been in Jo'burg for five years for nothing."

"Come up, Kruger," added Trooper Jenkins as he introduced the butt of a Martini-Metford to the visitor's back.

"My good men, my good men, what are you doing?" cried the General in alarm. "I am the Officer Commanding, really I am. If you don't know me, take me to the next picket—they are the Glencoe Highlanders, my old regiment. They at least will know me!"

A sudden thought struck the sergeant. This old gentleman seemed to know something about

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the disposition of the pickets. He looked at the steep hill which would have to be climbed before the picket could be reached, and then turned to his prisoner.

"Look here, Mister, we will take you up to the next picket. You say that you are the General. If, when you have climbed that hill, you are not the General, then God help you!"

After a quarter of an hour's climb they arrived at the Glencoe picket. The sentry looked at them in astonishment, and then cried, in a horrified falsetto, forgetting all his instructions about not paying compliments, "Guard turn out."

All that was heard of the Infernal Light Horse escort was the sound of loosened boulders as they made a record down the hillside.

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GERMANY

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WITH A CAR TO THE GERMAN MANŒUVRES.

THE Steam Packet steered her busy course between the sun-shadows cast by the huge fighting machines of the Channel Squadron, which at the moment had sought the anchorage of Queensborough roadstead. The warships lay moored indiscriminately, with true naval disregard of the rights of the fairway, dressed in all the lean panoply of manœuvre trim, the cynosure of a thousand admiring cockney eyes as the Sunday morning Flushing packet and the Clacton coast-boat passed out of the harbour.

"Lor," said the little pompous red-faced man, leaning over the rail of the Flushing boat and addressing the passengers in his vicinity with the easy *bonhomie* of the man who has grown opulent in turf finance,—"Lor," he said, as he nodded his head in the direction of one of the newest type of scouts, "with battleships like that, my boy, wot's the good of worrying the lads to march about the Surrey Hills carrying enough dead-weight on their backs to stop the best bit of blood in training? Why, look at 'en; see 'ow

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that one rides upon the bosom of this bloomin' deep. Wot I says is, with a bally certainty like that there battleship, wot's the use of hedging with a army?"

"That's wot I says," answered the little man's long, languid, lean-chested companion. "That's wot I says, but wot kind of a ship do you reckon that to be?" The little man turned upon his cadaverous satellite the look of contemptuous superiority which in their class is the surest indication of intimacy. "Lor, Bill, you may have an eye for spotting winners on form, but it's pretty evident that you wouldn't make much of a book on the Channel Stakes. Why, anybody with arf an eye as was educated could recognize that ship. Why, it's the Dreadnought, like as which there's no other ship afloat. Smaller did you say than those others? Come, now, you're trying to play the idiot boy. In course it's smaller than them others; why, that's the very bloomin' secret we learned from the Japs, isn't it?—that the small man wins. That's wot we've been keepin' from these Germans all this time. Why, we've just arf a score of them Dreadnoughts behind the startin' machine, and we walks over!"

The editor of the 'Metropolis Review,' who had been holding forth to the three second-line officers on the machinations of the friendly Power which the three officers were about to visit, stopped short in his arguments that German

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policy had been responsible for every misfortune in Europe during the last three years, even to the ill-success of the little Queen of Holland in providing an heir, and gasped—

"To think that such ignorance is possible, and that one is wasting one's life in the faint hope of educating such *canaille!*"

The Major smiled at the Editor's vehement denunciation of his countrymen's ignorance: in the uneven path of a checkered career he had seen much of men and matters, and the thought flashed through his mind whether the profound ignorance of the masses in the matter of foreign affairs were more dangerous to the country's welfare than the over-developed imagination of the educated. Keeping this reflection to himself, he hazarded an opinion that there were worse people than the Germans in Europe, and certainly worse countries to visit. The Editor of the Review turned on him,—"Never been in Germany before?"

The Major. "Yes, I have, but my two companions have not."

The Editor. "Then you ought to know what is in store for you; and you say that you are taking a motor-car with you! My gracious, sir, you will come back a wiser and a sadder man. Taking a motor-car to the manœuvres in Silesia! Why, the manœuvres will be over before you get your car through the Customs."

The Major. "Surely not."

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The Editor. "I promise you every difficulty will be placed in your way. Your present tolerant enthusiasm will be evaporated by the pin-pricks of officialdom."

The Major. "In which case our visit to Germany will hardly be a pleasant introduction to the fascinations of protection."

The Editor (*in desperate earnest*). "Protection has nothing to do with it. It is the crass determination of the Teuton to baulk and hinder anything British, whether it be political movement or commercial enterprise."

The Major. "As I said before, the instinct of protection——" At that moment indifferent steering on the part of the quartermaster of the Clacton boat nearly brought about a collision between the two packets, and in the excitement of the moment the Editor and the Major were parted. . . .

For the benefit of those who have not travelled by the morning boat *viâ* Flushing to Hamburg, and also to instruct those who may contemplate taking a motor-car from this country to Germany, it may perhaps be advisable to make some detailed description of the object of the tour which is the subject of this veracious narrative.

Fired by the statement made publicly by the Secretary of State for War, of enhanced position to their service, three Yeomanry officers determined to explore Germany by means of a 30 h.p. motor-car, and, incidentally, to find themselves—

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Providence and the mechanism of a French-built car being willing—in Silesia during the *Kaiser-manöver*. After much consultation with various shipping agents, it was found desirable that the car should be shipped direct to Hamburg by sea from Harwich, while the members of the expedition, including the owner, who was also driver of the car, made the journey to Hamburg by the ordinary passenger route—Queensborough to Flushing by sea, Flushing to Hamburg by rail. The car was shipped direct in charge of the owner's miniature chauffeur, a typical English town-bred youth of fourteen, who usually divided his time between valeting his master and rubbing the brasses on the car; who rejoiced in the name of "Tommy," and attached as much importance to his own personality as might a Grand Duke or a pre-revolution daimio.

It was in these premises, and with the understanding that the car, with Tommy complete, would be waiting for them on the docks, that the Three Explorers arrived in Hamburg and acquired the knowledge of its many stations. We have noticed that Englishmen arriving in the morning in a new or strange country follow precisely the same procedure. This, we presume, is an instinct common to the race. Anyway, the Major and his two subalterns, understanding no German, and being flung out of the *train de luxe* by an excited attendant at some unheard-of station, gathered their traps together, touched their caps

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to a policeman, and thereby captured a cab and were driven to the Hamburger Hof. Arrived at the hotel, events followed each other in the following inviolable sequence: a bath, a breakfast, and a visit to "Cook's."

With the visit to Cook's came the first disillusionment.

"Certainly, your motor-car has arrived; we will find it on the dock when we go down," and the polite young shipping clerk filled the Explorers with hope.

"That's ripping," said the senior subaltern; "we will be able to make Berlin to-night."

The polite young clerk smiled a sickly sort of smile as he answered—

"Berlin is a very long way, gentleman; perhaps you have no acquaintance with the German Customs. But, of course, there are plenty of trains to Berlin."

"What do you mean?" queried the Major; "it surely won't take us more than an hour to clear the car?"

"I see, gentlemen, that you have not very much experience of the German Customs. You will be fortunate if you clear one department per hour, and you will experience many departments before your car is free of official control. But I will come with you, and we will see. There is another gentleman who has a car which arrived two days ago; he is still clearing. We will see who will get off first."

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Ten minutes in a taximeter cab brought the party to the dock, just in time to arouse Tommy from the first fit of despondency that had ever been known to overtake him. And in the circumstances he was to be forgiven. He had left London in charge of the car with an apple, a night-shirt, and 13s. in his pocket. He had arrived at Hamburg, it is true, with most of his capital unexpended and his night-shirt; but he had heard that indescribable soul-moving sound, the bang of a burst inner tube, three times during the journey. He had arrived with his three flat tyres, to see rude dockyard hands, undeterred by his earnest representations, wheel the car about to the total destruction of the punctured tubes; and when his rightful master found him he was fast losing hope of ever seeing his own again. It was a pathetic sight to see this little stranger mounting guard over his maimed car and reckoning every foreigner as an anarchist.

"Sir," he said, with a tinge of both scorn and reproach in the inflection of his voice, "do you know that they can't understand English?"

His master, who was known to his intimate friends as "Birdie," to some extent mollified his miniature henchman by inferring that they hadn't had the opportunities of the Board school. Not that this explanation entirely satisfied Master Tommy, for all through the tour his attitude towards such Germans as were ignorant of his

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native tongue was one of distrust, superiority and contempt.

Everything comes to him that waits. On the dock the Explorers experienced wait number one. It took an hour, with the aid of an expert brought from a garage in the town, and with all hands piped to quarters, to get the tyres right. Then, by standing in a line behind the interpreter and repeatedly capping an unctuous individual in a uniform hat, the latter consented to have the car swung by a crane to the road level. This operation took half an hour more. Clear of the dock-shed, petrol had to be administered. Consequently by the time the car arrived at the Customs it was eleven o'clock. But arrival at the Customs buildings did not mean by any means emancipation. It was but the beginning of the trouble.

"Have you the certificate from the automobile society?" interpreted the clerk from Cook's. Birdie allowed that he had not. "That is a pity," answered the clerk, "as you see there will be much trouble."

The Major was then ushered into a room where three fiercely moustached clerks, dressed in the habiliments of soldiers, rapped out a string of interrogations. The attitude of the inquiry was that of a self-righteous magisterial board to a felon. The Major stood hat in hand while Cook's clerk, all obsequious, gave answer in a thin voice to the following multitude of questions.

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"Where have you come from? Where are you going? Why are you going there? When will you go there? Which way will you go there? When will you come back? Which way will you come back? How long will you be away? What is the make of your car? Why did you bring a French car to Germany? What is the number upon your car? Who gave you that number? What is the weight of your car?"

These desperate and be-sworded custodians of the excise having exhausted their stock of queries, condescended to give permission for the car to be weighed. The little party of English Explorers man-handled it on to the bridge scale. Its weight being entered, the Major was directed to go to the police station and make his peace with the Commissary of Police.

Looking at his watch, the Major found that it was already twelve o'clock. Wearily he hired a cab and was driven to the Scotland Yard of the flourishing seaport. Here he was invited to mount to the fourth storey. A curious installation of recurring lifts, moving on an everlasting belt, carried him to the required floor, and there the interpreter found entry in the Registration room. Here for the first time were met officials in office who were not in uniform and sword. A nicely-spoken, fair-haired Saxon took up the Major's plaint. He understood English with considerable difficulty, and made himself coherent in the same language with the greatest labour. But, doubt-

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less wishing to profit by the occasion, he scorned the interpreter, whom he waved to a far corner of the room, and then intimated that in half an hour's time he would be pleased to accompany the Major to inspect the alleged motor-car at the docks. The Major, still hat in hand, retired to the rude bench provided for the accommodation of the mere civilian when waiting upon the lowest grade of police inspector or inspector's clerk. It was half an hour to the second when his Excellency the junior clerk signified that it was his pleasure that the inspection should now take place. As the Major did not know at what moment some department to which he might be required to present himself would not declare itself closed for the day, or for several days for that matter, if it suited their inclination, he suborned the driver, and drove at breakneck pace to the docks.

On arrival the Major found that Birdie and the senior subaltern, sick to death of the artistic architecture of the German Custom-house, had hied off to seek refreshment and more attractive surroundings in the town. At the present this did not matter, but it was to furnish an excuse for a further official delay later.

The police clerk broke in unceremoniously upon the privacy of the four fierce Custom-house officials. The five men then entered upon what appeared to be a bitter and recriminating altercation over the motor-car, but which was really

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a simple and friendly settlement of the various tags of red tape which were still loose in their respective departments. The fiercest and fattest of the Custom-house officials, having banged the desk at least fourteen times, and having, with both hands clenched and turned skywards, delivered his peroration at the top of his deep voice, the business was clinched, and the little police clerk turned to the Major and said, "Where is your chauffeur?" The question was awkward, because Birdie, who did the driving of his own car, and who was in consequence chauffeur to the expedition, was in the town, absent without leave, consoling himself with iced lager; while Tommy, who sat in the car with all the outward and visible signs of chauffeurdom, was in no mood to show that deference to the German official which, in like circumstances, is the foreigner's sole chance of salvation. For at least a quarter of an hour the little police official was adamant. The four blustering Custom-house officials, hand on hilt, gave him solid support. The man from Cook's was speechless from terror. One can imagine that his state of mind was that of the diplomat who has failed in his diplomacy, and momentarily anticipates the penalty of failure.

But there is a little bird that sits up aloft which looks after the interests of poor vagrant Englishmen. This little bird brought its influence to bear on the Major, and prompted him to suggest to the police officer that if he would only wait five

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minutes until the beer-drinkers returned, he should be driven not only back to the police station, but to any other place in the town that he desired. He softened immediately, and the hands of the Custom-house clerks fell away from their sword-hilts. Within the prescribed time the absentees returned, and the Explorers thought that at least freedom would come with them.

False confidence! The maze at Hampton Court is an open and clear stretch of country in comparison with the ways and means of the German Customs' procedure. Although he had waived the necessity for the production of a chauffeur's pass, yet the police officer was not going to lose his chance of a free ride in a motor-car. He intimated that if we would carry on with our business he would await our pleasure. With this he snuggled down in the office with the four rampant clerks. The Major was conducted to a room in the far end of the building. Here a shabby and ill-uniformed clerk entered up the particulars of the car in duplicate. His record was then taken to three different officials for counter-signature. Each of these officials in turn, according to his particular grade of dignity, kept the poor wretched applicant waiting, until at last the Major had entirely forgotten the sensation of having a hat on his head. Finally, the order was given to the cashier for the purpose of receiving a deposit. This, mark you, was the only part of the business that was put through with any rapidity. A duty

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of 50 marks and a deposit of 200 marks had to be paid over the counter before the Customs would clear the wretched car. A white-bearded sportsman, who seemed to be just a trifle more human than the majority of his confrères, took the gold with avidity and handed back in turn a bundle of Custom-house clearances, gorgeous in official seals and bewildering in tabulated regulations. It was just about two o'clock. Anyway, it was over, and with a light heart the Major stepped back to where his friends were waiting at the car. The little police clerk was with them. He was not going to lose his drive. As he took his place in the car he called the interpreter to him. "You will explain to your master," he said, "that it will be necessary for his chauffeur to go this afternoon and be examined in driving. Also, any time after four o'clock this afternoon, when I shall be back in office, I shall be pleased to issue a pass and number, provided he has a plate fixed on the car stating the maker's name, the horse power, and the total weight. I will now give a card to Mr ——, who will hold the examination at his garage. Of course I cannot say if you will find him at home, because he is a great motor-driver, and is often away from Hamburg for days."

The Major had no words that would adequately express his feelings when the man from Cook's translated this Parthian shot. A wave of resignation had now overtaken the whole party. The

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Major knew better than to be abusive, since his companion in misfortune with the other car had attempted to steer a course for himself on the "British subject" tack. He had immediately got into shoal water, and was still trying to release his car when the three Explorers were the other side of Berlin.

At all events the most crying want for the moment was the desire for lunch, and as soon as the policeman had been deposited at his destination Birdie steered the car straight for the Hamburger Hof. Leaving it at the nearest garage with instructions to have everything ready, including the name-plate, the Explorers turned into the hotel café for the first real restful half hour they had had since their breakfast in the morning. Still determined to get clear of Hamburg that day, the Explorers had little enough time to spare in profiting by their lunch rest. As soon as the last morsel of food had been eaten, they entered upon a search for the motor-expert who was detailed to hold the examination. Providence was again in favour of the travellers, and the expert, after keeping them waiting for just three-quarters of an hour, finally consented to be driven round Hamburg. The Police Bureau was due to open for the issue of passes at four o'clock, and it seemed, if the authorities were fairly *facile*, the Explorers might hope to be seriously on the road to Berlin by five o'clock. But there was no end to the wait-a-bit thorns. The party returned to

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the garage at a quarter to four, to be met by the facer that it had been impossible to get a plate for the distinguishing detail. The Major suggested to the interpreter that, in the circumstances, it would perhaps be as well to ask the police clerk to dispense with these distinguishing details, especially as the name of the car and its horse-power were on the *chassis*, and the gross weight would interest nobody except the Customs officials, who had already weighed it to their satisfaction. But the man from Cook's shook his head, and said, sadly enough, that if he knew the procedure of the Police Bureau on these counts, there would be little chance of their issuing a driving licence and the official car number that afternoon. There was but one expedient, and that was to paint the numbers on the splash-board. This brilliant idea came to the Major, and the white paint being at hand, the car was speedily equipped. It was a toss-up whether the police clerk, since he had suggested a brass plate, would be large-minded enough to accept the makeshift. But possibly the servile attitude of the Major, and the memory of the fleeting dignity of the drive through the city, cleared the atmosphere, for at half-past four the party emerged from the Bureau, the Major grasping the official number, and Birdie, owner of the car, in possession of a first-class certificate as the Major's chauffeur. Back to the garage now, and a final application of white paint to make absolute the new number.

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The release was too much for the Major: he pressed his hat firmly on his head, and swore volubly for fifteen minutes. "Just by way of preventing the affectation of this thrice-cursed servility from sinking into my bones," he explained, in mitigation of his conduct. By five o'clock the car was on the road, it having taken three civil Englishmen and one obsequious German clerk nine hours and three hundred marks to get it from the landing-stage on to the high-road to Berlin.

There is a wonderful fascination in the motion of a well-balanced high-power motor-car. In few other mechanical contrivances is to be found such direct evidence of man's skill and power as in those compact and subtle engines, which in response to the gentle pressure of a lever accelerate the speed of the vehicle to sixty miles an hour, or stop it dead within half a dozen paces. We know that the steam locomotive of the railway companies and the various denominations of manufacturing machinery are even more wonderful creations than the motor-propelled carriage, but their power is not so directly impressed upon our daily life. You cannot bring your railway engine to your front door, or stable your steam-weaver in your coach-house.

The fascination of the car was upon the Explorers as the 30-h.p. Gnome carried them through the Hamburg suburbs. They leaned back in their seats satisfied with the triumph over German

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officialdom, and elated with the prospect of a splendid run to Ludwigslust. It had been the advice of the man in charge of the garage that the Explorers should attempt to make Ludwigslust that night, and place 60 kilometres of the Berlin road behind them. Provided the roads are good, 60 kilometres is not much to a 30-h.p. car when all is going well. But if black care be the companion to the horseman, it will rack the ingenuity of contemporary philosophers to enunciate the particular qualifying adjective to adequately describe the brand of "care" habitually ensconced in the back seat of a motor-driven vehicle.

For the first ten miles out of Hamburg the Explorers had no cause to complain, beyond several lengths of cobbles,—a species of roadway which, fashionable in Germany half a century ago, is now only preserved in the vicinity of towns and villages. The Senior Subaltern, who to his friends responded to the name of "Ethel," divided his time between reading the very excellent road-map which the Continental Tyre people have published for the instruction of their clients, and in comparing the country the car was passing through with the Midlands. Suddenly his reflections were cut short by that sound which, to the motorist, is the most depressing in his category.

"That's a puncture," remarked Tommy, as he automatically began to search for the tool-case. Birdie brought the car up with a soft anathema.

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A short inspection showed the travellers that the last hour of daylight would be cut out in manual labour. The pleasures of motoring had begun! Ethel seized the ratchet-jack and, prone on the highway, began to raise the injured wheel. The Major undertook the less laborious function of removing the splash-board, while Birdie busied himself with the valve, chiding Tommy the while for his constant lapses of memory with regard to the tools applicable to this special injury. It may be said here, in parenthesis, that this was practically the accident drill formation always adopted, and during the brief tour the Explorers became so expert in the exercise that they reduced the delay on a common puncture from three-quarters of an hour to five-and-twenty minutes. A few minor alterations were made in the actual formation, but as a rule Ethel took the ground, Birdie the manipulation of the tyre and inner tube, and the Major the air-pump. Tommy, who from the outset was proved to be absolutely useless in every capacity except a dog-like affection for his master, usually collected nuts and screws and spanners by day, and held the acetylene lamp by night.

Three-quarters of an hour saw this particular wound healed, and with the assurance of the Major that there would be a magnificent moon after eight o'clock, the expedition settled itself down for a 50-kilometre run. But there is little room for continuous optimism in the life of the

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motor voyager. The road was improving, and with it Birdie's spirits, so that when it reached the confines of the village of Geesthacht the car was eating up the kilometres. At least half of the way to Ludwigslust was done when another tyre gave out. Birdie stopped the engines, and with the tired air of a man who has no anathema left in which to express his feelings, detached one of the lamps and surveyed the damage.

"That," he said, "was a new tube in Hamburg."

The very lameness of the exclamation was indicative of the driver's feelings. The others of the party were silent. Their silence was eloquent of despair.

The silence was broken by Tommy. "It's a good thing, sir, that it happened in a village."

"And why?" queried the Explorers.

"At least we shall get some dinner, sir." Prompted by his stomach, Tommy was the best philosopher of the party.

"Is there a hotel?" queried Birdie.

"It's not marked in the guide-book, but I noticed that that lamp on the white house we just passed showed up the word *Gasthaus*, which seems a subject worthy of investigation," was the Major's ready response.

There was nothing for it but to agree. The car was turned slowly round, and Birdie took his party, on a flat tyre, to the entrance of the little white hostelry. A portly Teuton came shuffling down the steps and introduced himself as the host.

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As was to have been expected in a village so far from any great town, the host had no English; but, with the natural intelligence of his class, the one word "zimmer" hurled at him in three interrogative keys produced the gesticulation of assent. The Explorers' first care was for their machine. There was a convenient yard behind the hostelry. Into this Birdie slowly manœuvred the vehicle, and proceeded to examine the latest damage; while the Major and Ethel endeavoured to discover somebody who would be able to appreciate the meaning of their united efforts in broken French. The solitary waiter of the establishment —the class of servitor who gives the appearance of having been born in his dress clothes, and who certainly sleeps in them—showed sufficient knowledge of the diplomatic tongue to follow something of the conversation with which the host was besieged. Anyway, a gleam of intelligence passed over his face, as he separated himself from the little knot of interested spectators which was fast gathering in the courtyard, and disappeared. This waiter, if he had been better groomed and had cultivated political temple curls, would have passed almost in any crowd for Winston Churchill. The likeness was so complete, even to the suspicion of an impediment in his speech, that the Explorers throughout their tour always spoke of Geesthacht as "Winston." This was a coincidence, since later in their travels they were to meet the embryo Minister in the flesh, masquerading as a gay

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Hussar. In five minutes the waiter returned, and the Explorers were rapidly brought to attention by a soft voice that inquired in English whether the speaker could be of any service. Tommy was the only member of the expedition who was not put out of countenance by the fact that a native of such a remote village should speak his mother tongue. From his insular standpoint the speaker was the only intelligent person in the place, and he turned to her from his operation of lighting the lamps with the request that she would order a beefsteak for supper.

The new-found interpreter proved to be the wife of the local grocer. She had spent twelve years as a stewardess on the Far Eastern run of the North German Lloyd Steamship Company. This accounted for her proficiency in English. Birdie's demands upon the interpreter were less mundane than those of his miniature chauffeur. He had arrived at the knowledge that the last spare inner tube for his front wheels was punctured, and that unless Geesthacht could supply the wherewith to mend it, there would be a pretty kettle of fish. Frau Grocer put the question to the assembled villagers, and elicited the reply that there was only one man in the village to fit the case. This was Hermann the blacksmith. Immediately the spectators understood that the services of Hermann the blacksmith were required, volunteers were forthcoming to summon him. The interpreter explained that not only was he an

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expert who renewed bicycle tyres, but that he was also the village *farceur*.

In a short time Herr Hermann had been rescued from a neighbouring beer-garden, and arrived with enough tools to demolish the most stubborn motor-car. Judging from the hilarity of the spectators, it was a matter of deep regret to the blacksmith that our fate had been decided on the merits of an inner tube and not by the machinery. But he accepted the situation with the usual good grace of German villagers, and, after a request for beer, promised us to have the puncture mended and the tube ready for work at the end of an hour.

The principals of the expedition put their heads together in the light of the acetylene lamp which Tommy had lighted, and studied the map of the road to Ludwigslust. The way was long, and in spite of the promise of a midnight moon it seemed that the way was dark. Also at that moment a fragrant whiff of a frying fillet stimulated the consultants to consider the advantages of an early morning start in preference to a midnight trail. And so it fell out. The blacksmith, true to his word, had the inner tube[1] patched by the time the succulent fillet had ceased to exist. But the effect of an excellent meal, and more excellent beer, had decided the Explorers to "plump" for an early morning start.

Nor was this little roadside inn without its

[1] This patch lasted throughout the whole tour.

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fascinations. It was just a roadside hostelry tucked away in a simple village one stage out on the great Hamburg-Berlin high-road. As the Explorers followed the prototype of Winston to their chambers, they found that the *Gasthaus* boasted a luxury of appointment which had remained unchanged since the early decades of the nineteenth century. But the Explorers were much too tired to make more than a cursory examination of old oak panelling and heavy antique furniture. The repletion of a solid, well-cooked supper, the accumulated weariness of their struggle with the Hamburg police and Customs, and of their manual labour on the road, heaped heavily upon them. Climbing into their great four-posted troughs of beds, they pulled the fat pillows over them and immediately fell asleep, dreading the "Winston" knock, which was to awake them with approaching daylight. . . .

There are few sensations in this world which in the ecstasy of their delightfulness can equal a summer morning drive in a high-power car, when the road is perfect, the weather fine, and the engines are straining to do better than the driver's check on the combustion-chamber will allow. In the reverse, there is no sensation so dispiriting and deplorable as that which overcomes a motorist when either the road is impossible, the machinery recalcitrant, or the season obdurate. But it was in the first of these series that the Explorers took

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the road on the morning after their accident on the Berlin road.

Birdie, who was usually philosophic both in success and adversity, waxed quite optimistic under the influence of the morning air. The road was superb, just undulating enough to make it interesting, and the car was moving like a living creature. The Explorers were into the village of Lauenburg before the stolid inhabitants had opened the shutters of business. The requirements at Lauenburg were merely a matter of motor-spirit. But as the car drew up panting in front of the shop which boasted the motor sign, it was surrounded by a group of interested schoolboys. Following the proverbial Continental custom — a custom which might well be introduced into this country — all the boys were dressed in the uniform of their particular gymnasium. They were bright, jolly, square-headed little fellows. Each was carrying a satchel, but what surprised the Explorers most was the fact that suddenly from the midst of the guttural jargon with which the youths were discussing the merits of the car there burst out a voice in pure English interrogation, "I say, are you people from England? It is not often that we see so many English people here in Lauenburg." A little fair-haired urchin was pushed to the front by his confrères. He proved to be a Lincolnshire boy, who had been sent, by parents more shrewd than the majority of English parents, to school in Germany in view

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of the advantages that such education would give him in after-life.

But the Explorers had no time to spend in Lauenburg, or anywhere else, in the discussion of the merits of scholastic education; they were racing against time; sixty hours hence they were due to be on the extreme border of the German Empire. Unless they were able to make Berlin that very night, it was probable that they would miss much of the main object of their tour. As they left Lauenburg they had at least two hundred kilometres to cover before they made their legitimate halting-place that night. But the day was young and the season was fair, so as matters stood there was nothing really desperate in the effort.

The car was still putting her back into it and racing along at a good thirty to forty kilometres an hour, so that the occupants only had a chance of minutely studying the beauties of the scenery when of necessity Birdie had to slow her up over the cobbles, which in motoring are the most striking features of German villages. But it was a delightful journey. In comparison with the farmers in the south of England the German farmers are behind in their season, so that much of the journey was made through an air heavy with the fragrance of new-mown hay.

In this spirit the Explorers came to Ludwigslust, and skirted round the magnificent park which encloses the Schloss of the Duke of Meck-

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lenburg-Schwerin. In Ludwigslust it was necessary to find comforts both for man and machine. The party had started from Geesthacht upon the lightest of breakfasts, and Birdie had some growing anxiety with regard to his inner tubes since Tommy informed him, with the indifference for which this young person was remarkable, that a certain supply of these essentials had not been packed in the journeyman trunk. The Major, who understood less about motor-cars and more about gastronomy than his fellows, volunteered to search out a place for food. From its exterior the Hotel Stadt Hambourg appealed to his taste in wayside hostelries. Two miniature waiters, who responded to the names of Fritz and Hans, bowed him into the oak-panelled salon. After some gesticulation and a particular amount of tribulation, the menu was produced. A minute study of this document resulted in the Major being able to decipher one solitary entry. This was "beef-steak *à la Tartar*." It must be said in justice to the Major that he took no count of the "à la Tartar"; the "beef-steak" had a homely ring, and it was put on order for the whole party. As a result of this luncheon the Major became exceedingly unpopular with his junior officers for at least half an hour; while Tommy, who was never afraid to butt in where angels would have exercised shyness in treading, expressed his contempt both of the Major's powers of selection and the Germans'

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art in cookery. He was never able to disassociate himself from this contempt even until the end of the journey. For the benefit of the uninitiated we would point out that "beef-steak *à la Tartar*," the delicacy that Hans and Fritz deftly arranged before three hungry Englishmen and one ravenous English boy, is composed as follows:—

One piece of *raw* beef-steak minced very fine, rolled into a ball, flattened on the top, garnished with a thin slice of pickled cucumber, with the yolk of a raw egg balanced on the summit. (The Major asks people who are ignorant of German dishes, when travelling in Germany, to remember this recipe, for if raw meat may be digestible, it does not improve the tempers of those who are used to taking cooked meats as their ordinary form of nourishment.)

The cycle-smith, who called himself a motor expert, at Ludwigslust cheered the little party of Explorers with his description of the road to Berlin. Moreover, he showed his gratitude for the custom that had been brought him, or probably for the enormous profit that he had made out of the confiding foreigner, by presenting the party with a guide-book specially given by the Continental Company to help wanderers on the road. This is interesting, since it shows that, in effect, that churlishness and want of charity which we in this country are so prone to associate with everything German is more or less

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non-existent when the traveller gets beyond the official pie-crust, which is the least digestible portion of the Kaiser's kingdom. The Explorers, from start to finish of their journey through Germany, received nothing but good-humoured civility and unbounded kindness from every one with whom they came in contact, excepting perhaps the police and Custom-house authorities. That they suffered many restrictions during their passage through the Customs was only to be expected from a country so official-bound.

Trailing the dust of Ludwigslust, the Explorers ate up the road until they arrived at Perleburg. Here a short halt was made for the self-indulgent purpose of imbibing lager beer. Between Perleburg and Friesack Birdie began to coax the car. "What is wrong?" said Ethel.

"She is missing a bit," replied the driver.

"What is she doing now?" queried the Major.

Birdie looked over the side and estimated that the pace was between twenty and twenty-five. "It is not enough on this road,—she should be doing double this pace, especially in the afternoon; she is pulling against me somewhere, I am not quite sure yet where it is. I wonder if they have bent her in any way in swinging her in and out of that ship."

But for the moment the pace was good enough to get them to Berlin that night, and at this juncture Birdie was not prepared to give him-

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self away on the subject of the excellence of his car.

Thus the expedition came to Friesack. Friesack was full of entertainment. Although these motor enthusiasts were in search of manœuvres, yet the manœuvres that they wished to follow were still three hundred miles away in the direction of Poland. Friesack, however, was the centre of another set of manœuvres, and when the car pulled up in the square opposite the statue of the Elector Frederick I., the Explorers found themselves in the middle of a park of artillery. A division of artillery was billeted in the town, and the new shielded quick-firers were all drawn up in battery line in the centre of the town. On this account, to a large extent, Friesack had dressed itself in gala colour. That is to say, the girls in the shops had put an extra finish of ribbon round their necks, and the various keepers of beer-palaces gave an unwonted prominence to eagles and the red, white, and black. The new quick-firing artillery had attractions beyond all else in the village for the Major, and when at last he was warned off by a sentry for being over-zealous in the interest he showed for the Krupp design of quick-firing breech-block, he found that both the subaltern officers had deserted him. Ethel, with the quick eye for the most favourable line, which is an instinct with most British cavalrymen, had noticed an attraction in a neighbouring tea-and-

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cake shop which was not altogether confined to the display upon the counter. Birdie, who though not quite so quick was not less expeditious than his brother officer, had removed the car to the local garage, and having dismissed the master of that institution on some errand to his workshop, was engaged, when the Major unearthed him, in making an exceptionally comely daughter of the house understand a smattering of German which, learnt in childhood, required almost the full limit in gallantry to be rendered intelligible. These conflicting factors delayed the expedition at least half an hour longer in Friesack than was necessary for the internal lubrication of the car.

Berlin was still about seventy kilometres distant, and it was well past four in the afternoon when the travellers left Friesack vanishing behind them. But the way was still good, — in fact it was excellent, — and though the car was still resenting the pace, and her machinery showed those signs of peevishness which every driver knows too well, yet Birdie seemed confident that they would be able to make Berlin that night. He spoke confidently for the present, but shook his head as he remarked sagely, "We shall have to have her overhauled in Berlin. I cannot for the life of me think what is wrong with her. It seems to me that when I had her overhauled in Reading they must have used the wrong oil. There is nothing amiss with the

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carburetter, and she sparks all right; but she is not the car that she was in England a fortnight ago."

In spite of Birdie's forebodings, she carried on very well that night. The country in the evening proved to be most delightful. At intervals the car would rush through little old-fashioned villages, scaring the inhabitants at the unusual sight; then it would plunge into hundreds of square miles of pine-forests. Here and there were evidences of the coming manœuvres. In one place a group of staff officers were discovered reconnoitring for position. In another a cavalry fatigue-party was busy placing black flags to indicate that such country was too broken for the movement of mounted troops; and at a third point the car overtook a column of route moving into one of the positions assigned to the various units in this autumn war game, which is carried on from one end of the German Empire to the other.

As night fell and Tommy was instructed to light the lamps, the travellers had placed another big slice of their journey behind them, and were only ten miles from the town of Nauen. Owing to the early start and the bad choice of the lunch on the part of the Major, the nourishment of the day had been of an impoverished kind. As a consequence, the travellers promised themselves a square honest meal at Nauen, and from thence a midnight drive into the metro-

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polis, with the reservation, which is usual in such cases, of the right to change the programme after dinner.

It was just about seven o'clock when the car pulled up in front of the chief hotel in Nauen. Being so close to Berlin, the local celebrities were more used to motor-cars than they had been at most of the hotels on the Hamburg road, and accommodation was immediately found in the inner court for the vehicle. The hotel combined, like the majority of such institutions in Germany, a beer-garden with a residential establishment. It was also provided with a very excellent bar in the main reading-room. To this bar the travellers drifted, and fell to the choice of the "slap-up" dinner they had promised themselves. They found that full attention was not for them that evening, since an unusual event was attracting the solicitude of all the waiting hands in the establishment. A regiment of Cuirassiers of the Guard, *en route* for the manœuvre-area the Explorers had just passed through, were billeted for the night in Nauen, and the officers of this *corps d'élite* were the principal guests in the hotel that the Explorers had themselves selected.

It so chanced that when the Explorers had finally decided upon their repast, they turned to the man behind the bar, who spoke French, and demanded the exact distance by road between Nauen and the capital. Just as the question

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was asked, an officer of the Cuirassiers was passing. Seeing at a glance, even if the execrable French accent did not declare the fact, that the inquirers were English, he turned to the bar and said in perfect English, "The distance is thirty kilometres." He was duly thanked, but appeared to be as keen to continue the conversation as the Explorers were to have the natural indications of the road explained to them. In common politeness the Major offered him a drink. This was refused, but a gold bejewelled cigarette-case was produced to further the acquaintance. The three travellers, somewhat sobered by the massive character of the cigarette-case, helped themselves demurely, bowing with a grace which their ill-assorted attire scarcely warranted. The Cuirassier officer then introduced himself, but so slurred his denomination that the travellers never caught his name. The next move was obvious. The Major invited him to join the Explorers at their dinner-table. The Cuirassier bowed politely, and regretted that he had already dined, but suggested that as the travellers were so kind, he would be glad to join them at the table, and would like to bring some of his brother officers who also spoke English. The incident was really very friendly and pleasing.

The three travellers occupied the table which had been prepared for them, and in a few minutes four stalwart Cuirassier officers came and joined them. There were mutual introductions,

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followed by a class of entertainment which at one time looked as if it would wreck all the well-laid plans which the Explorers had made to reach Berlin that night. The Cuirassiers insisted that they were the hosts as far as libations were concerned, and they hoped that their guests would join them in a beverage they affected themselves. This was a mixture of German champagne with claret,—a mixture which is most seductive to the taste, but against this seduction the uninitiated are warned. As is only proper on such occasions, the Explorers were not to be outdone by the aborigines, and bowl after bowl of this "Cuirassier punch" disappeared with a rapidity which could have left nothing to be desired from a wine-merchant's standpoint. Half-way through the *séance*, however, Birdie, who was possessed of a worldly wisdom which his youthful looks belied, had found it necessary to withdraw for the purpose of examining his car. Nothing could have been more fortunate than this withdrawal.

To many this little evening gathering may point a moral; but the moral that we are able to adduce from it is the one which remains uppermost in our minds after a close study of the German people in their homes—namely, that a very erroneous estimate exists in this country of the natural feelings of the German and his individual attitude towards Britishers. Those belonging to the ambitious classes, and certain of those of the commercial caste, may entertain

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some bitterness owing to the successes of this country, but as a whole the feeling is exactly the opposite; and, as is shown by this simple narrative, Englishmen conducting themselves with that decorum which every country has a right to demand from its visitors, are received, not with sullen politeness, but with every charity and good-fellowship. We would ask our readers to picture in this country a similar circumstance, whereby three German explorers arrive in some garrison town and find the hotel filled with officers of a Household cavalry regiment. Would the fact that the three addressed the bar-tender in German prove so attractive to British officers that they would, in the first place, go out of their way to render the visitors every assistance, and, in the second, invite them to join in an evening's entertainment? We will not venture upon an answer ourselves.

The Major allowed that he was prepared to stay in Nauen for a night; but his subordinates, of whom Birdie was the most vigilant, maintained that it would be far better to carry out the original programme and make the capital. As soon as the Cuirassier hosts found that their visitors were determined to push on to the capital, they immediately advised upon the choice of a hotel, and to make sure that the Explorers should receive every attention, one of the officers wrote a letter to the manager of the Hotel B——.

At midnight the party broke up with the best

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of mutual understandings, and as Birdie let in the clutch the officers of the Cuirassiers gave the Explorers a hearty send-off. The journey through Spandau to Berlin was without incident worthy of record, except a note of admiration with regard to Birdie's driving. Whether it was the brilliant lighting as the car neared Berlin and rushed along Charlottenburg Chaussee, or whether it was the kick in the "punch bowl," it is impossible to say, but Birdie as a driver showed a recklessness of spirit, tempered with a finish of execution, that he equalled on no other occasion during the whole journey! Only once he missed the way and took the car on to the pavement: that was just as he entered Unter den Linden.

Two minutes later the car was brought to a standstill in front of the Hotel B——. Three bright-visaged, but more or less dishevelled, Englishmen demanded a lodging from the night manager. Exquisitely dressed in a perfectly fitting frock-coat, the manager looked over the heads of the three disreputable-looking wayfarers. He had no room, the hotel was packed. Then the Major bethought him of the letter which his late boon companions had pressed upon him.

"This," said the night manager, taking the envelope, "is addressed to the manager. I am only the night manager. Do you authorise me to open it?" The Major slightly nodded in assent.

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The magnificent flunkey tore the envelope and glanced down the page. One look at the signature and the starchiness in his attitude entirely dissolved. "I beg your pardon, sir. Of course we have room. If we had not, when Royalty commands us by letter we must obey. We make room. Gaspard, give these gentlemen 218, 219, and 220. I think you will find that you will be very comfortable. If you will come with me, sirs, I will personally conduct you to your suite."

II.

At the suggestion of the night porter of the hotel—for which suggestion he charged a mark in his bill—the car had been housed for the night at the garage of an extensive motor-works in Berlin. Feeling that the recommendation of the leading hotel was sufficient guarantee for the preservation of their interests, the Explorers slept late on the morning after their arrival. About midday they made their appearance in the Unter den Linden, and, following the suggestion of one of their overnight boon companions, searched the Dorotheenstrasse for the lunch supplied by the Hotel Prinz Friederich Karl. The service in this old sporting house was excellent, and Birdie, who for some unintelligible reason had proposed to stand as host on the occasion, was initiated into the vagaries of a

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Berlin restaurant bill, which required him to pay for a brace of lobsters by weight, and peaches at one mark fifty a time.

After a very excellent lunch the Explorers wandered down to the garage, proposing to give the car a short overhaul before starting on their way, and making Frankfurt on the Oder the stable for the night. Arrived at the garage,—a huge yard enclosed by iron-studded swing gates, —the Explorers found three tyres down. Birdie's face lengthened. The manager of the garage, who barely understood the best possible French that the Explorers possessed, met all inquiries as to the cause of this sudden subsiding of inner tubes with a non-committal shake of his head.

"C'est très ennuyeux mais les pneumatiques sont mauvais."

This was poor consolation, since Birdie had equipped the car with new outer tyres before starting on the foreign journey. The manager summoned a gang of blue-bloused mechanics, and in ten minutes their united efforts made it clear to Birdie that the car had been lodged in the yard of one of those vulture firms which prey upon the owners of "bird of passage" cars. An examination of the inner tubes disclosed the fact that the car had been deliberately pushed about the yard on flat tyres. In all probability the valves had been previously unscrewed to render, from a destructive standpoint, this man-handling perfectly effective. But before they were again

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on the road the Explorers were to have their fingers further burnt by these self-same sharks.

Among the mechanics employed in this garage was a Frenchman. When, at last, the injured tubes had been repaired, and when, in the case of two rendered useless, they had been replaced and the car was ready to move off, the Frenchman came up to Birdie and said, laying a truculent emphasis on his words—

"Monsieur, il faut que vous restiez ici jusqu'à ce que le pneumatique que vous avez commandé arrive."

This was a deliberate effort to enforce a blackmail: blackmail was written all over the little Frenchman. Birdie, who had got his bonnet up for the purpose of oiling, denied the business claim, whereupon the Frenchman burst into a melodramatic appeal, first to Ethel, then to the Major, and finally to the manager and his colleagues of the works. From the melodramatic plaint he quickly enough changed to the aggressive, and announced vehemently: "Nous ne vous permettrons pas de partir, jusqu'à ce que vous m'ayez payé."

By this time Birdie had his engines started, and his passengers had taken their seats. But before he could let in the clutch, the Frenchman shouted in a high treble to his fellow-workmen, and they rushed forward, closed the swing gates, and slid down the iron bar which secured them.

The Frenchman, striking a defiant attitude,

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muttered "Maintenant?" For a moment the situation looked serious.

"There's the making of a fight here, Ethel," said the Major, as he jumped out of the car. "Now, you go for the first man that moves." After this injunction the Major strode to the gate, undid the bar, and pulled the wings open. Ethel was at his heels; and possibly his six feet of perfectly developed manhood overawed the blackmailers, for the heroic Frenchman gave place, and Birdie drove the car out in peace.

This incident is instructive, for it shows the snares and pitfalls which pursue the course of the ignorant and unwary motorist when, in the choice of a garage, he is dependent upon the advice of the hall porter of a Continental hotel. The writer has not the smallest hesitation in suggesting that not only did the proprietors of this particular garage criminally do damage to the car entrusted to their care with the specific object of reaping a benefit by the repair thereof, but they also, seeing that the owners of the car were foreigners unacquainted with the language of the country, deliberately attempted to hustle them into the purchase of a particularly expensive auxiliary.

By the time the Explorers had driven the car clear of this den of thieves and had collected their belongings from their original hotel, the unanimous vote of the party found it too late to attempt to make Frankfurt that night. The

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difficulties also of getting free of the suburbs in the half light of the evening induced them to prefer an early morning start. If they were able — and there was then no reason why they should not—to run into Breslau from Berlin, they would yet be in time for the Kaiser's review, which preceded the manœuvres.

Variety is always charming, and since, as a rule, it is not pleasant or profitable to return to a hotel within half an hour of paying your bill, the Explorers determined to sample another hostelry from those which had been recommended to them by their friends in Nauen. In this case no difficulty was experienced in securing rooms and a new garage, in which Tommy was housed to keep sentry over the welfare of the car. The Explorers themselves set out to discover Berlin by night, and after wandering through a considerable number of uninteresting beer-shops and cafés, came to the conclusion that the Café Riche was the place which gave best promise for a comfortable dinner. Except in the hotels, everybody in Germany apparently dines by daylight. The Explorers climbed the entry stairs to the Café Riche about 8 P.M. Except for the waiters, this gorgeously decorated dining-saloon was empty. The management, however, was quite prepared to serve their meal, which was styled a supper; but the head waiter explained that the place would not begin to fill until eleven o'clock, and would remain open until eight or nine on the following

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day. Not wishing to make the acquaintance of the Berlin night worshippers, the Explorers remained the solitary guests of the café until ten o'clock, and then returned to their hotel to fortify themselves against their projected early start on the morrow.

By seven o'clock on the following morning the car was making the trams stand still on the Frankfurterstrasse. It was a kindly morning, and in the beginning of the run the car was kindness itself. The road out of Berlin is always interesting, through the faubourgs of Friedrichsfelde and Biesdorf. In the grey of the morning, just before the lakes were reached, it would have been quite possible to have imagined that the Explorers had arrived upon Newmarket heath. They passed at least three strings of blood-horses wending their way to the gallops. There was no time to halt and investigate; but as far as sheets and bandages and the cut of the stable-boys were concerned, each string might have been turned out of an English stable.

It is not the intention of the writer to dwell long over the narrative of the journey to Frankfurt. It is not a happy story. Although the car had started smoothly enough, thirty kilometres out of Berlin she began her old fit of cussedness. Birdie's face grew longer and longer. He stopped her and tested the sparking plugs. He drenched her engines with paraffin. He unscrewed the carburetter, wiped the float, and then inti-

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mated in the saddest of sad intonations that he was a beaten man. After every incline the pace became slower, until at last the explorers looked down into the valley of the Oder with a car that was doing little more than ten miles an hour. Once on the road a great heavy touring car swished past them. It bore no mark upon its tail-board. It was one of the giant engines belonging to the War Department. There was a pensive look on Birdie's face as he stood still on the roadway, oil-can in hand, and watched the ordnance carriage disappear at sixty kilometres an hour.

Arrived at the pretty little manufacturing town of Frankfurt on the Oder, the Explorers took the car up to the vestibule of the Hotel Prinz von Preussen, Frankfurt was a town of 60,000 inhabitants. There was hope that something might be done to the car. But disappointment gathered thickly in the way of the Voyagers, for Birdie and the Major, on investigation, found that the only professed motor-smith was nothing more than a bicycle-mender. His men, clever enough mechanics in healing metal hurts, knew nothing of the diagnosis of ailments in the intricate machinery of a car. So leaving a minor break with them to mend, Birdie and the Major returned to the hotel to hold a consultation during lunch. The spirit in which both the lunch and consultation were undertaken was of a despondent character. All three of the Voyagers were so

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pessimistic that the consultation actually found itself looking up the train services from Frankfurt to Breslau. The nature of the repast, moreover, was lowering to the spirits. There is little that is encouraging in a choice between the braised back of a hare and the fat roast cutlets of a German pig. Birdie suddenly put down his knife. His companions looked at him in astonished expectation.

"What is it, Birdie?" said the Major; "have you had an inspiration?"

"I believe I've got it," answered the owner of the car. "It is all that bad oil they used in Reading. It has bunged up the silencer. We'll take off the silencer and let her rip."

"But it will make the deuce of a row," suggested Ethel.

"What does that matter as long as we get over the ground? Besides, it won't inconvenience any one on the road. It's only in towns that the noise upsets people. I know a man who always takes off his silencer as soon as he gets into the country. A car just flies when it's off."

And so it was ordained. The little crowd that had collected in the small front garden of the Prince von Preussen were nearly scared out of their wits when at last, at five o'clock in the evening, Birdie's small repairs had been effected and he started ignition minus his silencer. For all the world it sounded as if a battery of machine-

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guns had been brought into action, and there was not a window in the Wilhelmsplatz without a scared face pressed against it as the expedition started again in its endeavour to make Breslau by dawn on the following morning.

Birdie smiled again as his car jumped to every suggested impulse.

"She's herself once more," he said, looking over his shoulder.

"Well, then, you had better get her out of this place as quickly as you can," the Major suggested, when he could make himself heard above the awful racket of exploding gas which was taking place beneath the car. He was not unmindful that the look of astonishment beneath the *pickelhaube* of the local police might at any moment, as soon as their surprise was overcome, change to one of aggression. In fact, as the car swung down Breite Strasse, scattering a terrified crowd of marketers, the mien of the helmeted henchman who kept guard upon the bridge over the Oder was distinctly truculent. For a moment it looked as if the yellow-haired gendarme was about to raise his arm and signal Birdie to stop. But possibly the vomit of flame and smoke from the exhaust decided him upon a less venturesome course. As the car flashed past, the occupants caught a glance of the admirable flourish with which he drew a bulky note-book. The moment of anxiety had passed. If it were only the number that he required, there was still a

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hope that the Kaiser's review might be reached in time.

The Voyagers had barely placed Damm Vorstadt behind them when darkness closed down. The car was now absolutely flying, and was pulling against every restraining injunction that Birdie placed upon her. That journey through the night furnished an experience which none of the occupants of the car are likely to forget. The road, fortunately enough, was perfect, though, owing to the fact that it lay through pine forests, plunged in the deepest shadow. The pace was terrifying, and, in spite of the beam of the searchlight, the dangers of the road were so unexpected that nothing but the skilful driving of Birdie saved the party from total wreckage. The local peasant cart of Silesia is a cumbersome vehicle to move suddenly from the road centre, even if it should chance that the driver be found awake. The principle of lighting at night seldom appeals to these simple folk. As strings of these market conveyances were met that night, the dangers of the road may be imagined when Birdie was prepared to let her out to close on fifty miles an hour. Over and above the mysterious sensation inseparable from a night journey in pine forests, the intermittent din, the vomit of flame, and the rattle of explosion from below the car gave a fillip to a sensation of peculiar weirdness. There was the feeling of exhilaration bred of pace, the anxieties against accident or collision, and the fascinations

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of novel environment. With a crash and a thunder of cylinder explosion the car would dash through some hamlet, creating a tumult sufficient to wake the dead. In a flash it was gone, and the inmates left to imagine the rush of terrified peasants to lattice and casement to determine whether it had been mundane visitation or supernatural apparition.

The chronicler of this voyage of exploration would like to write, "And thus they came to Crossen." But it was not so. Black care was still beside Tommy in the back seat, and two miles short of Crossen a tyre went with a report that made itself heard above the volleying from the exhaust. It was a clean puncture. Inner and outer tyre were perforated. The acetylene searchlight was taken off its hook and brought to bear on the damaged wheel. Birdie shook his head and began to peel his coat. The rest of the party fell in at the appointed emergency stations, and there in the gloom of the pine forest, in the white light of the acetylene lamp, did an hour's honest toil. Such is the reward for driving a motor-car against time. The chances of the Voyagers being in time for the Kaiser's review at seven o'clock on the following morning had now contracted to zero. The puncture was so bad that resort had to be made to a shoe, which, luckily, at the last moment, had been added to Tommy's stock-in-trade.

Crossen lies in the vale of the Oder and, unlike

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the large cities of Germany, is early to bed. By the time the car descended the steep road into the town and crossed the bridge over the Oder, there was hardly a soul to be seen in the cobbled streets. With the utmost difficulty the Three Crowns Inn was discovered and the car lodged in the backyard. The head waiter of this queer little village hostel spoke English. He had passed an apprenticeship in the Hotel Métropole, Brighton, and seemed as delighted to be thrown into the company of Englishmen as the Explorers were pleased to find a comfortable meal. Over a very succulent fillet and the customary poached eggs, the Voyagers held a council of war at which the head waiter was invited to assist. The local paper made it clear that the review would be held on the following morning at seven o'clock. The head waiter ratified the information in the guide-book that Breslau was a good hundred kilometres distant. Birdie's information was the most decisive. He stated emphatically that unless a sufficiently able workman were discovered in Crossen to effect repairs, it was doubtful if the car would get along at all. The head waiter promised that one, Hermann, was a clever repairer, but doubted if he could be induced to work at night. All things considered, the consensus of feeling was against an effort to reach Breslau by seven on the following morning.

It might have been done by train. This alter-

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native was suggested. But the Explorers, with that dislike which is common to all motorists of deserting their car, however unfaithful, finally determined to cut the Emperor's review out of their programme and to content themselves with arriving on the following day at Breslau in time to take part in the actual manœuvres. If they could only have been equipped with second-sight, they might have saved themselves much speculation with regard to how and when they and the car would reach their destination.

On the following morning the Explorers' car furnished the centre of interest in the historic little township of Crossen. The Major took upon himself the task of procuring the services of Hermann the expert. The mechanic's comely daughter carried on her father's business office. Remarkable to relate, although she had never left the village of Crossen, this girl spoke a smattering of English and very fair French. With her as interpreter, the Major discovered the full limit of Hermann's repairing outfit, and the expert promised, after he had surveyed the damages, to have three inner tubes healed in an hour.

It was evident that Crossen had a turn for education for, as far as the Explorers could gather, every one within earshot of Birdie's now unthrottled combustion chamber had received a smattering of English and arrived to make conversation with the mad motorists. Tommy became so much at his ease that he was even seen to

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smile while endeavouring to explain the superiority of everything English to anything he had hitherto seen in Germany. The most bouncing of the many visitors was a young sportsman, of the colouring of a Belgian canary, who was absolutely fluent, and introduced himself to the Major with some pride as being the great grandson of the man who had shown Napoleon the ford at Crossen which enabled him to make the passage of the Oder. When asked if he was proud of his ancestor's action, the young fellow suavely replied—

"It is a family distinction, even if it is not creditable."

In an hour the Explorers were evacuating Crossen, if not with the same pomp and grandeur as did Frederick the Great and Napoleon, yet amid as much noise per axle. Outside the town is a steep climb. The car tackled it in as brave a spirit as she had shown when leaving Frankfurt on the preceding evening. Having scared a horse or two, and driven a few market-women in fear behind the plum-trees which border the highroad, the car settled down to her work, and it looked as if it were to be a quick though noisy run into Breslau. How liable is human perspicacity to err! Three miles out of Crossen, just as the car was passing a tiny hamlet, something snapped inside her. A jolt, a rain of substructure blows, and she came to a dead stop, her engines racing as they became relieved of all propulsion stresses.

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Birdie stopped the engines, and standing up in his seat said softly, very very softly—

"That is the limit. The carden-shaft has gone!"

A brief survey substantiated the theory. This indeed was the climax. From the very beginning it had been a chapter of accidents. There had been tyre troubles beyond all precedent; there had been ignition and exhaust troubles; and now, when at last the Explorers thought they had coaxed and humoured her into a satisfactory if noisy temper, she had deliberately broken her back. Birdie emerged from under the car with his final diagnosis.

"Who's the Jonah?" queried Ethel.

Tommy, whose spirits never rose unless his master was in the direst misfortune, proved to be the most practical.

"Please, sir, 'taint who's the Jonah, but rather who's got a pair of horses."

"Well, there is one thing upon which we may congratulate ourselves," suggested the Major, "and that is that she's broken down within three miles of a railway station. Suppose it had happened, as it might well have done, thirty miles from everywhere!"

The stationary car soon attracted the usual village crowd. It was some time before the united efforts of the stranded Explorers could make their wishes understood. The average farm-labourer in Silesia does not readily understand

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the halting pronunciation of his language by the untutored Englishman. But ultimately the repetition of the word "pferde" brought a gleam of intelligence into the eyes of one of the local sympathisers, who suggested, more by dumb motion than by words, that an envoy from the stranded party should follow him to the residence of one Herr Dash. The Major undertook the new voyage of discovery, and was conducted to the chief edifice in the village. Landing him at the front door of a low whitewashed cottage-villa, the farm-hand deserted. The Major knocked, with the result that a round half-dozen of spaniel puppies rushed to the open door and welcomed him with an effusion that would have been gratifying if his peace of mind had been normal. By dint of more knocking a maid-servant, who looked as if she had just been milking cows or making butter, arrived and cleared away the struggling mass of puppies. Having remembered the name of the farmer, the Major eventually made himself understood. At least, muttering "Ja, ja," and pointing to the overhead storey, the maid disappeared.

After about five minutes Herr Dash arrived. He was totally different from the type of farmer that the Major had expected to find. A young man of two- or three-and-twenty, he obviously belonged to the refined and intelligent class. He was dressed in a well-fitting suit of German green-sporting mixture, and wore irreproachable

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butcher-boots. He welcomed the Major with a smile, and the Major attempted to open the conversation in French. To his surprise Herr Dash replied in English, and at once evinced the greatest sympathy in the Explorers' misfortunes. Calling for his Tyrolese hat, he proposed to inspect the scene of the breakdown.

The united efforts of Birdie, Ethel, and Thomas had resulted in the extraction of the cardan-shaft. One of the pins at the clutch end had been wrenched off. It was evident that no amateur repository work could cope with the damage. Further progress was a matter for draught animals as far as Crossen station, and a railway track thence to Breslau accompanied with a prayer that so large a city might possess motor-works capable of coping with the injury. Herr Dash, after a short consultation with a better-class peasant who had joined the circle of sympathisers, and who presumably was his bailiff, promised that we should have the draught-horses as soon as they came in from the plough for their midday meal. This meant an hour's delay; but as there is no wisdom in making a critical examination of the mouth of a gift-horse, the Explorers were content to spend the interval in the local beer-garden regaling their benefactor with the insidious beverage of his country.

Over the foaming beaker Herr Dash, in broken English, became quite confidential. He was a comparative stranger to Silesia. The son of a

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wealthy scent manufacturer from Cologne, his father had met his taste for an open-air and sporting life by the purchase, two years previously, of the farm he now worked. Asked how he acquired his English, Herr Dash replied that during the long hard winters in Silesia there was little to do, and he had spent many of the dark weary evenings of the last two years in a study of English. "But,"—and here his good-natured face brightened—"I shall spend no more evenings learning English. This winter there will be other things to do, as I am soon to marry." The Explorers were not slow in offering this good Samaritan every felicity upon so momentous a venture, inwardly trusting that when the novelty of the new move had worn off their friend would not be driven to a more energetic study of their language.

The Explorers had left Crossen that morning with the exaggerated arrogance of a powerful car bereft of its silencer. The return was meekness itself. At the tail of a lumber waggon, they and their car were towed gently into the goods yard of the Crossen railway station. It was an ignominious finish to a start which had held out a promise of far better things. There was no alternative,—the car would have to go to Breslau by train and follow by goods at the discretion of the German railway officials.

Remembering the trouble that they had had with the Customs, the Explorers approached the

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Crossen goods clerks with feelings of some trepidation. But although these be-uniformed worthies talked a great deal, and shouted loudly when they realised that the Explorers knew nothing of their tongue, yet they apparently made no difficulties; for though, reluctantly enough, the Explorers deserted their ship, yet they left it standing on the green of the goods yard without even running off the petrol, and in due course, petrol and details complete, it arrived at Breslau without further damage or undue delay. As for the Explorers themselves, they waited for the *schnell-zug*, and in this tame manner arrived at their destination after dark.

But their troubles were not yet over. Breslau was *en fête*. The Kaiser was in residence. With the utmost difficulty a cab was procured, and the driver directed to take the party to the Monopol. The coachman shook his head in a doubtful manner, and plunged his vehicle into the seething mass of spectators who thronged the streets. The whole town was illuminated in a curious and striking manner. Without exception, in the window of every upper storey three candles had been lit. Certain public buildings and commercial establishments had invested in electric and gas-illuminating lights, but for the general impression of illumination the city depended upon this universal candle service. The majority of streets appeared to be lined with troops, and in those that were not, the Explorers' driver

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was headed off by truculent gendarmes. With difficulty the Englishmen were brought to understand that the Kaiser had been present at some entertainment at the Hotel Monopol, and, until he left that building, there was as much hope of getting the vehicle up to it as there was of making the driver understand English. For two solid hours the Explorers and their chattels were kept waiting for the thoroughfare to open. They had one interlude. There had been a military tattoo in front of the Palace. The returning massed bands, led by the torch-bearers and colour guard, marched down the street to a funeral slow step. Anyway, if the Explorers had missed the Kaiser's parade, they had seen the street parade of the military tatoo.

When the streets were cleared the party made its way with difficulty to the Hotel Monopol. But even when they had arrived under the portico of the hotel their troubles were not at an end. The hall porter rushed out in all the glory of his servile trappings and ordered the coachman to drive away from the front of their hotel; they were taking no more visitors that night. Precisely what the Major said to this functionary would be neither necessary nor instructive in the elucidation of this narrative. The Major was tired of adversity, and the dull music of the torch-light performance had been the last straw to an equilibrium of temper never at the best of times too secure. The hall porter fell back aghast.

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The brilliant assembly of liveried lackeys opened a lane for the indignant Englishman. Half a dozen of the inner retainers of the hotel came forward to repeat the jackal yelp of the hall porter. Royalty and an influx of red, white, scarlet, green, saffron, black, and any other coloured hussar officer that you can think of, had turned their heads. The Major would have none of these under-strappers; he called for the manager. Desperate underlings said, "But it is impossible," and pointed to the open doorway of the ball-room.

"Fetch him out, then," ordered the Major.

In due course the obsequious manager was drawn out from under the furred dolman of a Princeling Hussar.

"But it is impossible, gentlemen; the hotel is full. Just look, this is an occasion."

"I wired for rooms," said the Major, "two days ago."

"Ah! but that was yesterday. You did not come. To-day, look at the state we are in."

"Am I, then," said the leader of the Explorers, "to tell my friend Prince M—— that, even after his recommending me to come here, you turn me from your doors?"

Instantly the manager softened. For a second time the august name of their Cuirassier friend had served the Explorers upon an emergency. Sleeping accommodation was forthcoming.

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TURKEY

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THE CONSTITUTIONAL CALIPH.

OUR Young Turk friend was emphatic. "Go and see the Selamlik. It is a most picturesque ceremony!"

"But," we protested, "you have to get all sorts of passes from the Embassy; there is no time to complete these formalities."

Our progressive friend glanced up and down the length of the hotel salon as if he did not wish to be overheard.

"We have changed all that. You will only have to present your card to the aide-de-camp on duty, and you will be admitted. I advise you to go—in these times, who can say whether there will ever be another Selamlik."

There was something so suggestive in the manner in which this simple remark was made, that we put on our best hats and directed a cabman to drive us to the Yildiz Palace.

The ceremony of the Selamlik is the occasion on which the Sultan of Turkey satisfies the religious obligations of his office by proceeding in state to attend midday prayer in the Mosque

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Hamidia. The ceremony takes place every Friday. It is said that during his long reign Abdul Hamid has never missed this public function: though evil-disposed persons suggest that on occasions he has been represented by a carefully selected double. In the past the viewing of the state procession has been considered a court function, to be attended by the members of the foreign diplomatic bodies in full ceremony. For these and other distinguished personages a room overlooking the route is prepared. Humbler foreigners, by the advice of their accredited Embassies, have been permitted to view the ceremony from an adjacent terrace. This terrace, however, has recently been removed owing to the misdemeanour of an American lady who, in a moment of sentimental thoughtlessness, tossed a note in the direction of the Imperial carriage. Subsequent visitors have suffered, for though the humbler foreign spectators are still allowed to witness the ceremonial procession, they have not the same coign of vantage as heretofore.

We arrived at the entrance to the Palace about eleven o'clock, and joined a throng of smartly dressed Turkish officers and nondescript spectators moving leisurely into the Yildiz grounds. Our Young Turk's promise proved correct. A plain-clothes detective demanded our cards, asked us if we were tourists, and being satisfied that we responded to the brand and that our place of domicile was respectable, passed us on to the main

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side-gate of the building where a very spruce aide-de-camp was marshalling the humbler foreigners. This young officer required no further guarantee than our cards, and we were signalled to take our stand at the end of a row of a score of foreign visitors who enjoyed the same privileges as ourselves.

Yildiz Kiosk lies in a little hollow that suggests an ancient water-way into the Bosphorus. The hills of Pera and Galata, a parquet of the red roofs and white walls of Constantinople, screen the Palace and its grounds from the general panorama of the town. But a little opening carries through to the blue waters of the Bosphorus, and as you stand upon the mound that was once a terrace you have a delightful view. In front of you is the Hamidia Mosque with its green gardens and solitary minaret. It is perhaps the least pleasing piece of modern Byzantine architecture of its kind. But Nature has supplied its background, and beyond the waters of the peerless Bosphorus you see the blue-grey silhouette of Stamboul, with all its glories of age and architecture. The Yildiz Palace itself is not an imposing edifice. It boasts no ornate frontage and rises from the roadway a pile of bride-cake stucco. From the actual Palace entrance to the mosque is little more than 500 yards.

But the assemblage for the ceremony is one of true Oriental splendour. As we took our places the almost discordant sounds of military music

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filled the air. The troops that attend the ceremony were arriving. Each detachment was headed by a band, and each bandmaster made the best use of his noisiest instruments. The number of troops that were marshalled into the confined space which encloses the precincts of the ceremony was a matter for surprise. First arrived the cavalry of the Guard, lancers, and hussars, twelve strong troops or four weak squadrons, as the case might be. Then a naval brigade. Infantry of line followed, troops not trusted in their loyalty to the Constitution. Two detachments of Albanian infantry, in snowy white and blue uniforms. These are the Sultan's pet bodyguard, known to be reactionary. They were followed by a detachment in sombre chocolate. These are of the staunch Macedonians which the Committee of Young Turks have imported into the capital to displace the Sultan's immediate bodyguard, and thus prevent the latter from becoming the instrument of reaction. By 11.30 all the troops were in position, and the roadway was lined four deep with naked bayonets.

Immediately the troops were posted the officers of state and household ceremony began to arrive. Staff officers grouped round the iron gates of the mosque. Grooms and eunuchs bustled backwards and forwards. Elderly generals sauntered up and down in earnest conversation. Gaily-dressed servitors led dear little princelings of very tender age and in full general's uniform,

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down the sanded path. Then a cortége was seen to leave the Palace gates. The troops were called to attention, then to "the present." The officers lowered their swords and turned their eyes to the ground. Preceded by a demure groom with his arms crossed over his breast, the ladies of the Harem were arriving. They were in four closed broughams, but the blinds were not drawn. Although knocked-kneed emasculates ambled beside the carriages we could see the profiles of the ladies through their filmly veils. Some were in European dress. It was but a fleeting glance, and it seemed to us that the chief attraction about these pale, dainty ladies lay in the mystery that surrounds their life of seclusion. After a little interval came another brougham, with its freight of veiled beauty and escort of effeminate Ethiopians. To this no salute was given, and we could only surmise that it contained ladies more fortunate in their beauty than in their birth. The carriages all drew up in the shade of the trees beside the mosque, from which poor coign the royal ladies are permitted to see their lord and master as he ascends and descends the steps of the mosque.

There was another short interval, and then the officers of the General and Palace Staff, dividing the sanded roadway, filed down in parallel lines to the courtyard of the mosque. A minute past midday a solitary trumpet-call announced the final opening of the Palace gates. Immediately

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a thin voice in wailing accents broke the expectant silence—

"Allah-i-Allah!"

It was the plaintive cry of the *muezzin*, high up upon the solitary minaret of the mosque, calling the faithful to midday prayer. Then came the throaty word of Turkish command; the fezzed soldiers lumbered to the present, and the bands blared out the National Anthem. And even above the commotion of military salute we caught the wail of the *muezzin* striving to dominate the secular acclaim.

Preceded by mounted aides-de-camp and dismounted grooms, surrounded by a loose phalanx of Albanians of the Guard, the Sultan was being driven in an open carriage to the mosque. Facing him, and alone, was the Grand Vizier.

A man of about equal age with our own King, Abdul Hamid from a distance has the appearance of being several years younger. The art and customs of his religion disguise the grey in hair and beard. Clad in an open military ulster, and with the conventional fez pulled low over his forehead, the Sultan certainly gave the impression of a healthy man. Considering the delicacy of his present position, with its memories of a shaded past and its promise of an uncertain future, we could not but think that the man, so lately despot, bore himself with dignity and confidence. He bowed gravely, even benignly, to his saluting subjects, and at intervals raised his

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white-gloved hand to his breast and forehead in graceful acknowledgment of a welcome that certainly affected an appearance of sincerity.

We found it impossible, in the brief glance that the ceremony afforded, to gauge anything of the true feelings behind those deep-sunk eyes. Beyond measuring the Sultan's composure by the noticeable anxiety of his chief officer of state sitting opposite to him, there was nothing to tell us of a nature that the world believes to be weak, treacherous, and revengeful. From the placid expression on his face we should have been inclined to believe that in the sudden and extraordinary metamorphosis that has overtaken his nation, the Sultan has found a relief from the most aching of his lifelong cares; that he has accepted the *rôle* of a constitutional monarch with a sigh of relief; that at least his declining years will be rid of that nightmare of intrigue that has been his lot for thirty years. But of what value as a guide to the promptings of the soul is the impassive countenance of the Oriental? We would have believed in the benign sincerity of the old man's face if our Young Turk friend had not so significantly warned us that even this pageant might be the last in which Abdul Hamid would officiate. Besides, we knew that at that very moment the guns of a Turkish battleship lying on the smiling waters of the Bosphorus were trained upon the Palace barracks, and that the very chocolate-clothed Macedonian troops

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upon the parade were there to overawe reaction in the Palace guards.

Such was the case. Could Young Turkey expand otherwise? Could the man who for thirty years had manipulated his State by duplicity and intrigue shed his scales with the ease of a reptile and turn to his released country in the new splendour of complacent impotency? Could he, to maintain the simile, glide clear of the voice of the charmer, and leave his cast-off skin buried among the autumn leaves? To Young Turkey it has seemed impossible. They, too, know the voice of the charmer. For a moment it was silent. But not for long. Low and enticing it has again found its way into the Palace. Its soft seductive note has not been entirely disregarded. But much as the Sultan may love the insinuating sound, it entices him now to graver peril than ever it did before. Young Turkey believes that the old man has subtle wisdom enough to be aware of this, for as surely as Abdul Hamid succumbs to the dangerous fascination of reaction will he die a violent death.

He carries his troubles well in public. There was almost gaiety in the old man's step as he mounted the private stairway to his mosque. Let us hope that he prayed for his country, and, if so, that his prayers be answered.

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Effect of the New Constitution in Turkey. Voting by Ballot.

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ENGLAND

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THE PEREGRINATIONS OF A COCKNEY.

[*Being the impressions of a Londoner who, discovering the facilities afforded by cheap week-end railway tours, proceeded to discover the country of which he had been a hard-working citizen for many years.*]

We awoke with a start. Surely we were in some foreign country! A side glance through the carriage window—a glimpse of red cliff and a rib-band of blue sea—and we remembered that we were two-thirds through a long train journey, and that, just before we fell asleep, we had left Exeter, with the comfort of its luncheon-basket, behind. But the strange sounds; the strange people! The carriage is full of them. Great thick-necked, heavy-jowled, broad-backed monsters. Except occasionally on the box of a dray or 'bus, we don't see such men in London. And the language. It took us some minutes to realise that it was an adaptation of the King's English. But what men!—their complexions were the colour of their own plum-tinted cliffs, and their boisterous conversation bespoke a state of health for which the definition of robust would be diminutive. By dint of study we eventually

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began to unravel the secrets of their dialect. There had been a market-day somewhere, and these were Devon farmers returning from their day's labour. There were five of them—the paunchiest, jolliest, healthiest five that imagination could associate with a single railway compartment. We could not help contrasting them in our minds, in their bovine wit and uproarious bonhomie, with the fellow-workers with whom we daily travelled home from the Mansion House. Those pale-faced lugubrious workers, with talon-like fingers grasping the handles of greasy handbags, and noses buried in rose or sea-green tinted papers. These were the men whom we had seen depicted in posters and periodicals,—the yeoman farmers, whom we believed, in our ignorance, to be caricatures as fantastic as the Adelphi villain and stage mother-in-law. We gazed in surprised admiration at their giant proportions, their cord breeches, thick boots, and gaiters. John Bulls every one of them! Hale, hearty, and intelligent! Their talk was of business, just us ours would have been had we met a city acquaintance in the Tube. But it was a business talk carried on at the top of their full-lunged voices, and punctuated with the geniality of their hearty natures. Nor was it an uninteresting talk though it smacked of plough, furrow, and horse. Little had we realised how intimately we Cockneys are associated with these stalwart yeomen until we heard them speculating

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upon motor transport. One would have it that mechanical transport was a fad,—that it would pass away as surely as the reign of the bicycle had been curtailed by time. But another took a gloomier view, and based his argument on the assertion that he had stock unsold because Tilling had not bought any horses this year. Here we were in common sympathy. In spite of the 250 miles separating us, these yeomen farmers supplied a moiety of the draught-horses which took Cockneys to their offices every morning. Little had we hitherto imagined, as we congratulated ourselves on catching the motor 'bus and saving twenty minutes, that we were unwittingly accomplices in the strangulation of another agricultural enterprise.

At Plymouth the farmers deserted us: the withdrawal of their boisterous hilarity left a very insipid atmosphere. But we had the scenery. To us the discovery of a Devon valley was a revelation.

The first view of Cornwall, as seen from a railway carriage, is not very exhilarating. Two hours of Devon, with its fine strip of sea-beach-travelling in the vicinity of Teignmouth, gives a standard in scenery in which valleys and stone walls are characteristic features. Besides, after six consecutive hours of rural scenery the senses are apt to become glutted, especially if your usual limit in railway transit does not exceed

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seventeen minutes plus twenty on the top of an electric tram. It is a long tiring journey, and we must allow that the last fifteen minutes, which should have been passed in scanning the beauties of a dying sunset on St Michael's Mount as we neared Penzance, were spent in thumbing the pages of a hotel guide. In the matter of home-abiding Cockneys,—our circle of acquaintances being no more travelled than ourselves,—it is often difficult to find a guide, philosopher, and friend who has sufficient knowledge of such distant regions to make us, in the choice of a lodging, independent of the guide-book. Being straitened in circumstances, we reluctantly pass over those houses whose legends are in bolder type, and turn to the less obtrusive descriptions. Eventually, just as the ticket collector announces his final *visé* preparatory to the terminus, we settled upon a private house, principally because it advertised a marine view at moderate terms. By the time this momentous decision was taken we had arrived at the most western limit of English permanent way.[1]

We must allow that for the rest of the evening we were much disappointed. The shades of night were falling fast, and the double arrival, first at the terminus and then at the private

[1] We bring this in here, firstly because references to the western limit must constantly recur in any narrative reflective of Cornwall, and secondly because it by no means marks the limit of the Great Western Company's western enterprise.

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house, were so like the annual holiday arrivals nearer home that we failed to realise that we had arrived for residence in the Duchy of Cornwall, a very distant confine of England. A commonplace porter and a commonplace seaside fly took charge of us and our belongings, and presently we pulled up before a commonplace row of houses, but we were prevented from examining the conjoining scenery by a commonplace shower of rain.

Great Hercules! A commonplace boarding-house. Dusty and respectable, with dim-lighted hall, row of dingy hats and coats, mahogany anteroom table, and case of stuffed sea-gulls. Shades of a thousand pirates! A commonplace hash-house: we might have saved our tourist tickets and spent the week-end within a stone's-throw of the British Museum. We conjectured a commonplace landlady also, but apparently competition is slack, for she took a lot of finding. We stamp in the hall, peep into the dining-room, cough loudly, raise our voice in direction to the flyman, and exercise all the artifice applicable to the situation, and finally summon a tall fair-haired schoolgirl, who, standing half-abashed in the shadow, asks us if we have any business. It is the landlady by her most complimentary deputy. What a relief! This fair child at least is not commonplace. She shyly bids us follow her and choose, and deftly casts open the doors of sundry rooms, which, in their cheerless chintz monotony, really offer no choice. We boldly

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enter the nearest, and demand a tariff. It is settled in a moment, and with a Parthian shot to the effect that the use of the bath will cost us fourpence extra, the schoolgirl obliterates herself in the shadows.

About the same moment a dismal-toned gong informs the guests of the house that their evening meal is served. We are late for the meal. Guided by the unmistakable aroma of boiled green food, we present ourselves at the hospitable board. Supreme moment! Curiosity attaching to the new guest or guests supplies the most exquisite excitement known to *blasé habitués* of boarding establishments. This sensation has arrived, also the minute of agony in which the novice faces the searching fire of a battery of expert eyes. A coarse napkin and tepid soup for a moment masks the withering character of the fire, and then, as the hum of conversation reopens, we have time to make a furtive reconnaissance.

We are ten. To our right are two chestnut-headed damsels, who sit demurely examining their plates, in juvenile replica of the elderly lady on their outer flank, who emphasises her state in tasteful crape and well-crimped muslin. The corner turned, an elderly white-headed old man commands the table. An irritating mole upon his cheek supplies, at first glance, his sole interesting feature. It is evident that he has sacrificed his health in the accumulation of a

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competency, and is now coaxing salubrious Penzance to humour his spent constitution. At his right hand we find that sheet-anchor of all hash-houses, the impecunious spinster who still skittishly clings to the wreckage of middle-age prime, and builds her hopes upon such masculine flotsam as our mole-marked friend. She is extreme in all her views and actions, even to the adaptation of girlish dress and manners; at one moment excessively religious, the next inanely youthful. Her next-door neighbour is another type in the hash-house category. It is the lonely widow who, like the aged spaniel, is searching for a nook in which to die. Not that death is at present imminent, but the shadows are lengthening rapidly, and the dear old lady finds the mellow winter easier to her in the west country than elsewhere. She is very deaf, very particular as to the quality of her food, and never fails to hear when her attention is least required. She has travelled much and far, and her memory is the best preserved of all her faculties. The two vacant places on our left are held by "an old world doctor" and his ample spouse. They, like ourselves, are chance visitors, not *habitués* of boarding establishments. To what practice, if any, the good man belongs it is impossible to surmise. As a practitioner, in habit, manners, and mental calibre, he is an anachronism; his fulsome compliments and benign pomposity schedule him as a courtly old man of self-elevated gentility.

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Of such was the family in which we found ourselves incorporated. The landlady did not appear. We found that the reason she had received us by deputy lay in the fact that she was the cook of the establishment.

Our appearance had evidently had a depressing effect, for we all ate boiled mackerel in silence for a while. Then our nearest chestnut neighbour ventured upon reference to the weather. We mumbled some reply. But the ice was broken and conversation poured in upon us. The hopeful spinster, who hitherto had exhibited all solicitude and attention for her mole-marked neighbour, could not resist in joining issue with the flood of test questions which flowed in upon us.

Were we going to Land's End? Of course we were. Then we must be sure and engage John Thomas as guide. He was such a reverent man, we must be sure and ask him to tell us the story of the Longships Lighthouse. We did not know the story of the Longships Lighthouse! It was the sweetest and most pathetic story ever treasured in village folk-lore. We must know that when the Longships Lighthouse was first built the fishermen on the Cornish coast were wreckers. They resented the building of the lighthouse, as it curtailed their nefarious traffic. The first lighthouse-keeper was a widower and, like the captain of the *Hesperus*, he had taken his little daughter into the lighthouse to bear him company. One

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day, it being calm, he had unfastened his boat and rowed to the mainland to replenish his stock of provisions. This was the wreckers' opportunity. They kidnapped him and held him prisoner, so that the lamp should not be lighted in the lighthouse for a week or so. His little seven-year-old daughter escaped their calculations. She watched in vain for her father's return. Then, as night fell, she realised that the lamp should be lit. Many and many a time had she watched her father at his evening task. Although her eyes were swollen with tears at her loneliness, although the lamps were at an eerie height, the tiny maid climbed to the lamp chamber. The lamps had been trimmed and left by her father, but she could not reach them. Down she went to the living-room, and toiled up again with a stool—the highest stool. Yet she could not reach by two inches. She was in despair. She again descended. There was nothing she could place upon that stool that would bear even her slight weight. Yes, there was. Her eye rested upon the family Bible. With tiny hands she reverently carried the sacred book upstairs. With an effort the belated lamps were lit. The great yellow beam flashed out across a rapidly rising sea, just in time to enable the unsuspecting skipper of a homeward-bound Indiaman to put over his helm, and thus escape the jagged edge of Land's End and the attentions of the wreckers!

The guests received the story with immobile

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expression—they had evidently frequently heard it before; and having delivered herself of it, the narrator returned to her solicitous attention to the mole-marked old bachelor. Eventually it was discovered that we were from London and we were duly commiserated with on account of our Cockney misfortunes, more especially when we dissembled as to the possession of a working knowledge of Bridge. We had been decided into this attitude owing to the fact that the deafness of the death-expecting widow had been temporarily dispelled by the mere mention of the magic monosyllable.

The ladies withdrew and over the doctor's fragant pipe we learned that he had retired from a pit-mouth practice just as soon as his grandson had qualified to take over from him; also that our mole-marked friend was, as we had expected, a retired Scottish merchant. Not smoking ourselves, we preceded the other male members to the coffee distribution in the parlour. We arrived to discover the elderly spinster in the pleasing vocation of vehemently remonstrating with chestnut damsel number two for the alleged delinquency of raising hopes of matrimony, in the aged merchant's breast, which she had no intention of fulfilling. At the same time the lady herself was placing the aforesaid Scottish merchant's coffee-cup on the hob out of consideration of the evil effects which the beverage, when tepid, produced in his particular state of debility. Into such en-

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vironment had our ignorance of travel and impecuniosity landed us.

If over-night, when tired from our journey, we had been disappointed in the immediate prospects afforded by our visit to the West, it was all dispelled as we pulled aside our blinds in the morning. We had chosen our lodging for its professed "marine prospect." It had been raining when, in the dark, we had sought the hospitality of its roof. But now both sea and landscape were perfect. A wealth of golden sunrise had flooded Penzance Bay. St Michael's Mount stood out traced brilliant in a fiery outline. A score or more of wind-bound merchantmen lay sheltering in the cove. Headland and foreland, fresh from the night rain, sparkled green and madder against the complementary splendour of sea and sky,—Newlyn, with its forest of yawl masts, just furnishing sufficient grey in smoke, and white in lime wash, to soften the startling monotony of burnished blue. Yet this was winter; scarce twenty hours previously we had steamed out of Paddington in the midst of a snowstorm.

It promised to be an ideal day for the duty visit which every stranger in Cornwall owes to Land's End. At the breakfast-table we were plied with advice as to the best means of conquering the ten miles which were then separating us from England's most western point. One of the chestnut damsels argued in favour

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of pedestrianism, and became so mastered by her enthusiasm for self-locomotion that she offered to accompany us. We, after listening to a lugubrious tale, from the hopeful spinster, on the terrors of combustion concealed in the petrol tank, elected to try our luck with the motor 'bus which the enterprising railway company runs daily to Land's End. Without doubt the motor 'bus is now the most popular tourist conveyance in the favour of Cockney sightseers. We discovered this to our cost for, as we sauntered up to the railway station at the hour appointed for the starting of the vehicle, we found that a train had just disgorged a load of week-end holiday-makers, and that every available seat was engaged.

We were undone, and it looked as if we should be obliged to return humbly to the boarding-house and cast ourselves upon the mercy of the athletic chestnut damsel. We were standing in this dilemma when a smart young Jehu hailed us from the box of an attending fly. "Would we go to Land's End? How many of us were there? Is that all! Then he had a trap at home that would make nothing of that journey if we would call it ten shillings."

In twenty minutes a really smart turn-out had picked us up at our temporary home, and in fine shape we were bowling along the Marine Parade. As we have already said, we had left Paddington in a snowstorm. It was still late winter in

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Southern England. But here in Cornwall, in spite of the north wind which swept across the peninsula, it was spring. The gardens were a mass of flowers; a blaze of blossoms that would not bloom in Surrey for a month or more. We passed that day field after field of wallflowers and commerce violets. Not aspirants just bursting into bud, but senile stems that, in spite of the season of the year, had faithfully fulfilled the demands of Covent Garden's winter market.

The road first took us through Newlyn, a fishing village full of history. There is always something romantic about a fishing village,—"they that go down to the sea in ships" sort of reflections. We must allow that our thoughts turned to many histories of the past as we sped through the little avenue of whitewashed cottages and trim smack masts. The sun was now shining and the sea a real Naples blue. The Scilly post-boat — white miniature-liner that she looks — was fussing at her moorings preparatory to casting off; at least half a dozen steam trawlers were heading towards the basin. It would have been an unimaginative person indeed whose thoughts had not wandered to the traditions of the past. It needed but little mental conception to see in those homeward-bound trawlers and the wind-bound sailing craft in the bay, the barques of those Moorish pirates who once made Penzance their haven; the flotilla of the Spanish invaders who have left their strain in the Cornish race; or

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perhaps the pinnaces of those stalwarts who sailed to Falmouth yonder, to cast in their lot with Drake and Hawkins and the other west country adventurers of whom Alfred Noyes reminded us in splendid verse through the pages of 'Blackwood's Magazine.' But our reverie was speedily dispelled by the driver. He was no dreamer, he was under no illusions about Newlyn and its fisher-folk. He was down brutally to the bed-rock of hard facts.

"See they trawlers coming in t' harbour, yonder? Well, they're Lowestoft boats. Fine figure they make the Newlyn men cut! They gets all the fish, 'cause why? The Newlyn men won't go t' sea if there's enough wind to make a candle gutter. Call that fishing! the Lowestoft men gets all the fish, and they're not afraid of any weather!"

Vandal that he was, to break in upon an enthralling reverie with the mundane fact that it takes a brave man to catch the mackerel we Londoners will have for breakfast, and that that brave man is not a Cornishman!

It is not necessary to weary you with a description of the country through which we passed in our wheeled pilgrimage to Land's End. It was just the same ever green, stone-walled Cornwall that is a lasting delight to the Cockney when he is able to see it. An occasional lime-washed cottage, the well-kept garden of a retired

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farmer, the monotonous and peculiar-shaped tombstones of a mining industry killed by Free Trade, a lovely coastscape fringed with savage rocks,—and there you have Cornwall. Plant in a flower or two, daub the winter hedgerow with flashes of bloom-colour, and you have Trelawney's country. Our business was to see Land's End, and we had selected quite a pleasant day for the inspection.

Our driver was in ecstasies because his good little mare brought us into the village of Sennen just ahead of the motor 'bus.

"What do they want the likes of they machines for when they can sit behind a little mare like she? Why, they can't feel theyselves going at all!"

We did not follow the precise logic of this ebullition of satisfaction, as we were engaged in deciphering the swinging sign-post of a lime-washed hostelry. "The last Hotel in England." A quaint legend—especially as we found on the reverse side the more inspiring inscription, "The first Hotel in England." Jehu went on to explain that, now that a tourist hotel had been erected nearer the Point, the truth of the "old house's" claim was open to question. After which truism he drove us up to the wind-swept caravanserai which does duty as the tourist's *point d'appui*.

There is always much satisfaction on a fine day to stand upon a promontory and gaze seawards. But the rugged terminus of England

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seems to possess an especial charm of its own. To our Cockney mind there was an indescribable deprehension in standing upon the extreme limit of our country and facing the immeasurable mass of ocean which our forefathers had to conquer before we could write a Western Continent on our maps. The first sensation was one of depressed astonishment that our little England was so small, that we really stood upon its natural boundary. And for a moment it took all the exhilaration of Cornwall's strong air to counteract the town-bred awe of the ocean. The real ocean — not your petty slip of swirling Channel. Here we stood upon the confines of the great mystery of the elements — that great blue expanse which rolls away without a break until, two thousand miles beyond, it comes up sharp upon Newfoundland.

"I am John Thomas!"

Back again from the land of dreams. "John Thomas!" Where have we heard that name? Of course,—our fellow-inmates in the hash-house last night. This ragamuffin, then, was the noted guide. We caught the glint of a whisky eye. We know your kind. We should like to have you down at the wharf in Battersea, young man. You would be the better for a week's honest work on an honest man's wage than enticing timorous females to lie prostrate on a ledge of granite in order to see through the rock cleft where "two oceans meet," and play-

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ing on their sympathies to the tune of too many half-a-crowns a-week by legending the countless tragedies coupled with this rock-bound coast. We know now where the hopeful spinster acquired her lighthouse story. Away with you! we will do Land's End by ourselves. To Hades with "Dr Syntax'" Head! We do not want your parrot chatter to help us enjoy Nature's wonderful seascape in its own iron-girt frame. Neither do we desire to lie prone on a table of granite with you hanging on to our ankles.

We wander down the slope of the promontory, which juts like a pier into the sea, and then by a well-worn path make our way to the perpendicular wall of cliff that is England's western edge. A few hundred yards away stands the Longships light on a wicked excrescence of reef, and, at the very moment that we gaze down, a big freight steamer is negotiating the deep channel between the point and the Longships pile. She is so close that we have almost a bird's-eye view and gaze down awestruck upon her decks. But to-day the sea is kind; yet they tell us that when she is angry her spray scourges over the spot upon which we stand, and that the thunder of her blows keeps the timid from sleep in the hotel above. A clamber on the rocks, a stone to scare the thousands of gulls from their eeries on the cruel pinnacles below, and a visit to the tiny dwelling of one "E. James," who claims to own "the last house" in England, and forthwith in-

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cites the unwary to buy picture post-cards in his dwelling, and we have done Land's End. Beyond the sentimental satisfaction of telling our "same suburb pals" as we journey citywards that we have been, for the space of one minute, the most westerly situated man in England, there is not much in it but rugged scenery. But then, to a Cockney, scenery and sentiment are everything, for they are the two elements which least enter into his daily life.

From Land's End to Aintree appears a long cry, but it is almost as quick as the Tube. The "Cornishman" brings you up to London in a little over seven hours, and once in London—why, every place is near. Anyhow, just forty-eight hours after we left Penzance we found ourselves on the top of a coach bound for the great Liverpool steeplechase. This at least was a new sensation for us. We had been to our own races—to Epsom, Kempton Park, even Gatwick and Lewes,—but never on the top of a coach. How we managed to be there does not matter: the story is too long to tell. We found ourselves there, very much to our own satisfaction, and we trust also to the advantage of the readers of these papers.

There is a fine exhilaration to be found in the top front seats of a coach. We doubt if the "road hog" in the best moments that he can get out of his 40-h.p. Mercedes on the Cambridge or

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Brighton road can ever quite reach the pinnacle of enjoyment experienced in fair-weather coaching. Four good and true horses briskly doing their work; the steady lumber of the well-balanced vehicle; dainty companions dressed in their newest and best; and finally the prospect of a sumptuous luncheon and a great race. For what are such moments to be bartered? We were a merry party, for though we ourselves were strangers, yet the ladder of a coach makes the stranger not only free of his seat on the vehicle but also of the society of his fellow-passengers. Ourselves, we were squeezed in between the outer rail and a charming damsel, who introduced herself by apologising for the amount of room she was occupying: as she was a mere slip of a girl, the ingenuousness of this remark served the purpose well. Our driver had not taken the main road, and we tooled along outside the stream of traffic that was thronging the direct route. It seemed that the whole of Liverpool was emptying itself into Aintree. Yet the approaches to this historic steeplechase course are singular: to Epsom Downs, to Kempton Park, and all of our southern race centres, there is abundant evidence of the course for miles before it is reached. At Aintree you just arrive suddenly at the centre of interest with its teeming thousands. Almost without warning you come upon a black multitude, humming like a disturbed beehive. Earlier in this paper we have made reference to that new and

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popular conveyance the motor 'bus. At Aintree this great ugly vehicle was a prime favourite. It would seem that it bids fair to crowd out completely the coach and team. It has upon its side every profit that is sordid, while every æsthetic attraction is absent. It has pace, commodity, and cheapness. But is not this to be expected at this period of utility development, when beautiful woman is content to suffer the motor mask and the chauffeur's leather jerkin? Our coach was jammed in between two of these modern mechanical monsters, and we were astonished at the bulk in passengers and provender that they disgorged upon the course.

It was a perfect day, and the northern world had awarded unto itself a holiday, and attended its most popular meeting *en masse*. Old *habitués* maintained that they had never seen such a gathering. The stands were just black with teeming sightseers and stood out against the sky in thick black smudges, relieved at their base by the green of the paddock and privileged enclosures. As is well understood, if you attend a big meeting on a coach you will see more of that peculiar national product, the racecourse crowd, than of the competitions responsible for its genesis. In short, be it Epsom, Newmarket, or Brighton, the main interest to the million is not the gallant striving of horses for the mastery, but the

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gregarious excitement born of a multitude in pleasurable propinquity.

"Get yer card — 'oo ain't served with a race-card?"

It is a babel from the moment that the official at the gate has scrutinised the coach ticket. "Race-card, a bob—all the winners marked, 'arf-a-crown!"

A dozen ragged ruffians revolve about you. You purchase William M'Call's pink print from the nearest dirty hand and push on into the crowd. What a crowd it is! Behind the row of coaches and omnibuses the wealth and beauty of middle-class Liverpool are shaking out the creases of the drive. The women, for the first time this year, wear their spring feathers; the men attired conditionally upon their views on sporting make-up. As the team has now been unhitched and the coach run into its appointed place, we climb to its summit, the better to view the palpitating scene around us. We are early yet, and for the moment business is slack with those of the racecourse faculty who, of great cupidity and small capital, have planted their trade banners within the carriage enclosure. They are a wonderful assortment, and are lined up against the carriage rail in such force that there is no elbow-room. As far as eye can reach stretches an unbroken frieze of bookmakers' legends. There are "Old Firms" and "Old Friends" galore. Names historical,

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names noble, and names humble. But the inscription board that catches our fancy is—

"Tom Cook, Birmingham,
Gives a run for his money."

We wonder what subtle meaning may be read into this trite exhortation to business. But on this day, although many of his friends "fall down" beside him from the high standard of integrity expressed upon their business blazons, yet Tom Cook stands solid to the end. But Tom Cook's comrades! What a galaxy! Bookmakers in white beavers, claret blouses, striped blazers. Turf accountants with specie-studded cross-belts and gaudily decorated satchels. But these are only the poor man's brokers. Across the green carpet of turf—for at Aintree the course is kept clear—one can see the agents of the rich. They may be more soberly dressed, but they are just as active as their comrades in the carriage enclosure. Even without glasses we can see their busy gesticulations, while their touts, in weird racecourse semaphore, are ever signalling the changing odds to their fellows in our midst.

We have an hour yet before the real business of the day begins. Every coach and vehicle in the enclosure is developing its temporary sideboard. Now is the time to mingle in the crowd, and jostle with that amazing medley which gathers at a north country meeting.

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Here we find, gathered together within an acre or two of enclosure and almost rubbing shoulders, the fair maid of the aristocracy in all the refined delicacy of Parisian dressmaking; her humbler yet equally well-cherished sister from the country-side; the over-dressed *comédienne* who chanced to be touring in the North; the Lancashire wife, who has come to keep her husband, the broad-browed pitman with her, from backing his fancy beyond his means. Even the little abigail, who should have been making our bed in the hotel, has enticed her soldier-lover to bring her to the rails of the enclosure. And with each class of the fairer sex is the due proportion of their men-folk, while mingling with them, in one ceaseless stream, are the nomad parasites of the racecourse. Plausible mendicants, they know the moments when the caution of the even liver most relaxes; they await these moments, and offering their evil wares, batten on the effervescent generosity of the racecourse. Harps and banjos, *blasé* baritones and blood-curdling contraltos, gypsies from the sunny South, tipsters from our own Cockney East, peer, *bourgeois*, tradesman, tout, plate-layer, pickpocket,—all levelled to the one motive in the nation's love and admiration of a noble animal engaged in a noble sport.

Two races have been run, and now the great concourse is preparing itself for the supreme event. The babel of ten thousand voices falls and rises with a rhythm not unlike the mini-

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ature breakers of a sullen sea. We must bustle back to the coach-top or we shall miss the *chef-d'œuvre* of the meeting. We push through the little circles which have collected to hear the tipster's patter.

"We gave you Imperial last time. Buy a card with the winner marked. Two winners already given. *Now* we give a certainty for the Nation —al. If any of you were at Lincoln you know what happened there. Five winners out of six, and outsiders every one of them. There never has been so successful — now, gentlemen, an absolute certainty for the Great Race. All marked on the card. The winner for a bob. Thank you, sir;" and as we passed, twenty fools transferred twenty shillings to this amazing youth, whose ready tongue was at least worthy of a Liberal seat. Tipsters are thick here; another almost cannons into us. He is of a meaner kind, and his raucous voice drowns all else: "Lemon drops, penny a packet, and the winner marked. The winner only a penny." As he exchanges his wares for copper, he scribbles a number on a slip of paper and passes it to the purchaser. We only hope that he flourishes on account of his sweetmeats, because no two of his purchasers seemed to receive the same winning number consecutively. We edge through this land of weird prophets, and climb to the back seat of the coach.

The babel of voices has reached its climax,

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and the stir amongst the enticing colours in the paddock foreshadows some movement. Here it is! The candidates for the great Hunt Race of 1906 are filing out on to the course. Their deportment is a striking contrast to that of the three-year-olds that passed out on to the course an hour ago. Though no less fit, they are far more decorous. The final preparation for the terrible four and a half miles in front of them, added to the discretion of years, is responsible for their more sober gait.

The veteran Drumcree, remarkable for his owner's hideous colours, led the parade from John M.P., his stable companion and the people's favourite. They were followed by twenty-one competitors, that looked in the rapid *coup d'œil* allowed to us as fit as a severe preparation could make them. A long procession of browns and chestnuts, picking their way over the green turf as if they were shod in satin. They pass down the whole length of enclosures; even the persistent bookmakers forget their business to appraise the noble animals, who all unconsciously are their patrons.

Then the leaders suddenly countermarch, and the sedate dignity of the parade is lost, for they all come hopping back over the preliminary hurdle. It is a pretty spectacle, and where all fly the flimsy obstacle so well and gracefully, it seems useless to look for a winner. But after this momentary vision, the voices of the Trade

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put new life into their business invitations. The hubbub of the bartering booms out afresh, and the tightly packed stands seem all movement. As far as we are concerned the horses have disappeared, as they have made their way down to the angle of the course from which they start. Suddenly, as if shut off by mechanical means, the boom of the countless voices is hushed. The starter is struggling with his field.

"They're off!" The silence is broken, more as an exclamation of relief, to immediately become more tense. For the moment we in the carriage enclosure must know no more of the race than we can gather from the sequence of the riders' caps as we see them, bobbing in the distance, above the black human edging that confines the course. At regular intervals the sequence of light-coloured dots rise and fall, and we know that their wearers are bravely facing the obstacles. Save for a few unconscious exclamations, there is absolute silence all round us. Some one hisses —"John M.P. is down," then, "Comfit is down." But this momentary sensation is cured by the echo—"Comfit is going strong." Comfit is locally owned, and having Mason in the saddle, carries much of the money from the carriage enclosure. There is a movement on the far side of the course. The black fringe of humanity has broken up, and is making a short cut to be in time for Valentine's Brook and the Canal side jumps. By

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this we know that the game horses are now toiling through the field of plough and harrow leading down to Beecher's. Something sensational has happened. We can see the movement in the stands. From their point of vantage those privileged spectators are pricking out the history of the Race. Now we see the dots again. They are over against the Canal bank. The field seems to be keeping wonderfully together. They are lost again as they emerge from the young wheat into the turf of the course. At last we are to have our spectacle, the water is just in front of us. The moment is tense, — not perhaps as tense as that which sees the run round the bend in the Derby, — but, "Here they come!" To the sounds of galloping on turf we all instinctively crane forward. Locked as one, two horses are going fast at the water. You have just time to see the set look on their riders' white faces and to realise that the colours of one are yellow and the other blue, and they have flashed past, to be followed in quick succession by the rest of the field—at least, by the majority of them.

A positive sob goes up from the spectators as the memories of that sudden flash of the race straighten out the uncertainties of the interval. "John M.P. was not there." "Comfit was not there." Alas! that ragged crowd of spectators that dashed across in frenzied

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haste from the farther fence to the Canal side knew that Comfit had come to wholesale grief at the Canal point, while at the ditch before Valentine's Brook the favourite had hit the guard-rail and blundered out of the race. But of such incidents is steeplechasing made, and we are all again searching for the dots with our glasses. "Yellow still leads." This much we can discern as they plod on for the second time towards Beecher's. The plough is telling, and almost at every fence the number of caps seem to lessen. They are over Beecher's and crawling along the Canal side. Now they are in their seventh minute, and the pace that has killed the majority seems to be breaking the hearts of the survivors.

"Yellow still wins!" In the excitement few realise that though the jacket is the same, the cap is different to the one which had led over Beecher's. Timothy Titus, the sole remaining fancy of the faculty, fell after negotiating the Brook and the one "yellow" surrendered his place to have it taken by the other.

It is a procession. The National, they say, usually is. At its best it is a wicked race. Four and a half miles at racing pace, with thirty stiff jumps, mostly out of "plough," takes a powerful lot of doing and is only within the constitutional capabilities of the few.

"Here they come." Now we can hear the distressed pant of the leader, even above the thud

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of his hoofs and the shouting of the crowd. Alone he comes, with ten lengths in hand. The jacket is yellow; but it is not Timothy Titus. "All yellow." We look to the card. "Ascetic's Silver!" The blue ribband for 1906 falls to an outsider.[1]

[1] Prince Hatzfeldt's Ascetic's Silver, ridden and trained by the Hon. A. Hastings.

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WITH THE RUCK TO THE DERBY.

"To Tattenham Corner!"

There it was in black and white, staring us in the face. A simple placard posted outside the station door. We had left our office chairs, and were sitting in the window watching London bustling in the busy street below us. It was London in the haze of approaching midday heat. London of radiating paving-stones and sweltering asphalt. London of straw hats and——

"Shall we go? We need only be away about four hours, and just think what a day it will be on the Downs!" and instinctively H. put out his hand to reach his hat.

To Tattenham Corner!

The magic in that simple legend. We gaze hesitatingly at it, then a smart hansom deposits at the station door a well-groomed man escorting a fashionably attired lady. The man has field-glasses slung across his shoulders; he stops and buys a race-card from a busy hawker on the curb. Obviously he is bound for Epsom. Every one who can find the time is bound for Epsom. It is such a glorious day. The last scruple vanishes;

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we will go to Epsom too. We are not dressed for the part. What does it matter? Who will know us in that vast concourse of people? We will go—we will go with the ruck and take our chance with the ruck.

"The last special, sir, leaves at 12.30. Room, sir? Yes, you will have lying-down room from here; but you will fill up at Cannon Street and London Bridge. Cannot guarantee you any class these times. No, you won't be in time for the first race, but you will be in time to see the Derby. Thank you, sir; hope you back a winner, sir."

The inspector spoke the truth; we did not fill up until we reached London Bridge. Even then we did not fill up as heavily as we anticipated. We only took two more truants, from oppressive London, like unto ourselves. Truant No. 3 was a silent, solid man. His mellow face spoke of exposure and strong waters. He was evidently in the habit of attending race-meetings, since he entered fully equipped with the necessary accessories. Just as the train was starting, entered truant No. 4. He presented a striking contrast to No. 3. He brought in with him all the gaiety of atmosphere inseparable from the Cockney as soon as he may with decency affect the panama. He settled himself in a corner, shot his pink jute cuffs, pulled out a gigantic cigar and before commencing to uncase it from its tinfoil covering, smiled indulgently upon us as he unburdened himself of his introductory question—

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"Goin' to back Catgut, eh?" (Silence.) "Well, if you are not, you ought to. I am!" Then he rattled on, making the conversation for the whole party, as only a Cockney can. "I tell you what it is, I have got to get a little of my own back. I was stoney broke yesterday. Had only my ticket to get home with. My pals played it low down on me, I can tell you. They were on Kroonstad, yet they would give me nothing to get back with. Fine kind of pals I call them. But 'oo cares?—I can't help it. One day luck's in, next it's out. When I tell you that my name is Chandler, you will see how it is—it's in the bone, you see; my dad's name was Chandler and my mother was a Jupp. How then can you expect me to keep off a little game of gee-gees? Why, my dad never missed a Derby for fifty-three years, and when I was only eleven they put me on old Spatch Cock to ride a trial with Nemesis and that's now—let me see, how many years ago. Now look here, gentlemen, I'll bet you a thick 'un all round that none of you guess within two years of my age. Now, how old do you think I am?" (At this juncture truant No. 4 took off his mock panama, in order, we presume, that we might judge of his age by the bleachment of his locks.) "Now there is no kid. I bet an even sovereign that none of you can name it within two. See, I will write it down on my cuff. I can't alter that now or change it. Any takers? Well I never—goin' to back Rock Sand at odds

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on, and not ready for a little flutter on the road. Well, there you are — forty-three — an' none of you would have pitched it higher than thirty-five."

How much further the genial Cockney and sharper might have entertained us it is impossible to say, only at Croydon we picked up four more truants, which considerably curtailed his field of operations. The conversation became disjointed and less localised. But the Cockney had played his part well and had manfully endeavoured to bring us novices up to the betting scratch by the skilful disguise in his conversation. Doubtless he had found the age ruse work with wary novices who would have shied at a pack of cards or a thimble.

To the stroke of the scheduled time of arrival the special put us down at the new station at Tattenham Corner. The shouting which heralded the finish of the first race greeted us as we passed through the station barrier and became integral units in that vast Derby concourse.

Cold Lunch, 2*s*. 6*d*.

"We must feed," said H., as the inviting placard of a great catering firm caught our eye. "This is no day to brave a crowd with a loose jerkin." This sound philosophy brought no demur, and unknown we dived into the great unknown.

"Hullo, J., so we can't even come to an English racecourse without finding you in evidence. It was the *Sudda* judge whom we had not seen

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since the days we donned silk at northern Indian meetings, and beside him stood the greatest authority on Thuggee and Dacoity that Bengal had ever seen. The great unknown, indeed! Why, the first persons that we met knew us, and were bent upon a mission similar to our own. What memories this chance meeting in the railway *buffet* conjured up! The steady murmur of the Derby crowd died away. We were no longer a mere grain in that vast dune of sand covering the Epsom Downs, but a principal again. The silk jacket rustled under the covert coat as we waited at the door of the weighing-room. Then our turn came. Off with the coat; where is the saddle, the martingale?—"Ten stone two, please." "You want a little more—a pound will do." "The big lead, please." Then the race. The irritable starter, with his field of gentlemen riders; the little square of white flag that dances before your eyes, and which it seems will never fall. But all this is dreaming. We hurriedly swallow our lunch, bid farewell to the Indian civilians, and dive into the Derby crowd. At the sight of the Derby crowd all memory of India and its race-meetings fades and dies away. It is a glorious day—gold and blue above, gorgeous rain-fed green below. But a solid drugget of black has been drawn across the green. The crowd lies, in shaping like a skate with outstretched tail, right down the straight five furlongs of Epsom turf. Where the stands tower there is the body,

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a solid mass of palpitating humanity; towards us, all along the rails to where we stand, tapers the tail. And what a crowd it is! It is composed of mere holiday-makers like ourselves, the effervescent froth of London's lower classes. The rich and the business seekers gravitate towards the stands, where on either hand a veritable multitude of "turf accountants" have raised the symbols of their trade, and are shouting the odds, which seem to regulate with almost supernatural unison and rapidity. It is indeed an ideal Derby Day. Harriet, too, has not been unmindful of the opportunity which the gorgeous sun and perfect sky has given her. She is bewitching in the airiest of muslins that will contrast with pink and blue, and the whitest of panama hats, with brim enticed and bent into rakish angle and jaunty poise. Nor is Harry behind her. He too has affected the panama; and though his flannels are not obtrusive, yet he has satisfied this shortcoming with the excessive exuberance of his waistcloth and the colour of his flaming tie. Poor things! Why grudge them the "properties" which go to make their simple pleasures? To-morrow Harry will be totalling figures in demure monotony behind a counter; while Harriet will know no more of white gloves and pipe-clayed shoes as her aching fingers ply pickle-jar, typewriter, or paste-pot.

We pushed our way through the crowd towards the course, and for the first time began to feel

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the necessity for a guide. One was at our elbow in a moment.

"Race-card, gents?"

"How much?" said H., feeling in his pockets.

"A shilling to you, gents; they was 'arf a crown. This is the last I 'ave; so 'aving made my profit, I can afford to let you 'ave it cheap"; and the dilapidated vagabond passed a dirty piece of pasteboard over to us. H. counted him out three coppers.

"Lor', sir, I couldn't let you 'ave it for that; I should 'ave the Trades Unions on to me. Make it another penny, and I'll mark all the winners for you."

We threw him the copper and passed on. Already the course was clear, and the candidates for the second race forming up at the five-furlong post. We were novices on an English racecourse. It was the first time that we had seen jockeys crouched up behind their horses' ears, or the starting-machine. It must be allowed that the first impression was not engaging. We had been trained in a school where five-furlong scurrys were usually lost and won at the starting-post,—where everything had depended, not upon the balance, but the horsemanship of the jockey. It was a shock, therefore, to see a field of ten horses ranged up behind a barrier which only two of them would face with equanimity. It was a shock also to notice that when a jockey most required his leg-power to keep his mount straight, he was

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sprawling about on its neck with his knees almost touching his chin. Again it was a shock to see that the starter was immaculately dressed, as if the pulling of a lever required the same attention to toilet as an afternoon tea-party. These are, of course, only the conservative ideas of men to whom the starting-machine is a novelty. But in the present case there appeared no advantage in the barrier — eight horses out of the ten would not face the white strips fairly; and when at last the ribbons disappeared overhead, the field was "all ways," and it was not an eighth-part as good and fair a start as a strong official would have effected, with the same field starting from a walk, to the office of a flag.

Those at the post see little or nothing of the race. A mob of galloping horses and silk-covered backs rapidly disappearing, and then the crowd breaks cover and throngs on to the course behind the race. But we had come to see the Derby, and recked little of the five-furlong scurry which preceded it. There was perhaps three-quarters of an hour before the race, and we made our way down the course in order to secure some good place of vantage to see the great event. Shouting at the stands showed that the Juvenile Stakes had been lost and won, but already the course was thronged. It is a marvel that it is not kept clear between the races; it is many times more a marvel that it is ever made clear for the races.

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A walk down the Epsom course between races on Derby Day is perhaps the most interesting experience to be found upon any racecourse in the world. On either hand is gathered a heterogeneous *chevaux de frise* of vehicles which, that morning, have made their way from London. On the one side the stately coach, interloping motor-car, and gaily caparisoned *char-a-banc;* on the other a veritable sea of chariots—omnibus, drag, buggy, butcher's cart, and coster's shay. But that is nothing to the array and armament of the betting faculty. They have opened batteries of every size, shape and calibre. As far as eye can reach above the mass of seething crowd these batteries rise tier after tier. And what is more, they all seem to be in action. The more appalling the odds, the fiercer swells the din of battle.

Was there ever such a cosmopolitan area as the green turf of the Epsom track on Derby Day! Here we pass a group of charming ladies, in the clothing of whose dainty persons the price of a plater at least has been expended. They belong to the gay world which makes Ascot and Henley so bright and picturesque. Next, and almost rubbing shoulders with them, we find four of the most forbidding touts that Bethnal Green could produce and Epsom attract. Here a party from Suburbia, dowdy perhaps in dress, yet honest in their intention to make Epsom the most delightful picnic of the year. And so you pass on, to find rich and poor of both sexes moving as it

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were hand in hand; within the narrow corral of the Epsom rails the law-abiding citizen and the habitual criminal, the honourable man and the knave, the innocent and wicked, the dissolute and pure. All with their minds fixed on one common object—to turn this form of national pastime, as best within them lies, to their own personal advantage. Marvellous sight, extraordinary gathering!

"Take a good cooler!" The Italian ice-cream vendor is doing a roaring trade. A few steps farther along men of Gaelic colouring have attracted a knot of delighted holiday-makers to witness the sinuous contortions of the sword-dance in rhythm to the skirl of the pipes. Then our way is blocked by a still greater crowd. "The Mammoth Tipster of the World" is holding forth. Quaintly attired, jockey above and gamekeeper below, the tipster rattles off to the admiring crowd his stock-in-trade patter. It delights them, it keeps them in good-humour, and even makes them laugh. We catch a fragment, "Therefore, if you have not backed a winner, my advice to you is to back the horse which runs second for a place." This tickles the crowd. They applaud the cryptic humour in the speech, and we pass on nearer to the domain of the Jockey Club.

"Shall we expend a guinea and seek entrance to a fashionable enclosure?"

"No, we are not well enough dressed. Our straw hats and flannels have not the guinea

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hall-mark upon them. Besides, we are of the great unknown!"

So we turn to the nearest enclosure, which seems less crowded than the majority. For an expenditure of fifteen shillings between us they grant us admission. We find ourselves in a respectable if not high-class society. The majority of our fellow-prisoners behind the bars are lunching. Theirs is the simple kind of lunch which can be conveniently carried in the pocket—hard-boiled eggs and sandwiches. But a dishevelled ruffian is determined that none shall starve for want of enterprise on his part. "Lobster and bread, a 'bob!'" he shouts, and displays his wares. He has a greasy carpet-bag full of small lobsters, freely intermingled with chunks of bread. These he cheerfully barters at his tariff price. Providence alone can know the far-reaching effects of his "Lobster Trust."

Then the saddling-bell rings. Our attention at once returns to the real business of the day. They are clearing the course for the Derby. If there is any one circumstance attendant upon Epsom meeting more wonderful than another, it is the manner of the clearing of the course. As has been shown, the turf between the rails is crowded with the merry holiday throng. The crowd includes hawkers selling food, race-cards and even pencils; dealers in oranges and ice-creams; open-air variety artists, the daintiest of ladies, and the roughest of roughs. Out from the openings in

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the rails file lines of blue-coated policemen. Right turn—and the extended lines are passing up and down the course. They are few, the crowd is dense. But it disappears before them. It is an object-lesson. That crowd is such that if it willed otherwise the police could be swept before it as corks upon a wave. But whatever his class, whatever his understanding, the Englishman will not spoil sport. With good-natured bantering and without the slightest show of force, the crowd disappears, as if by magic, before the thin blue line. In five minutes it is clear, and the space that was so animated stands out like a great emerald bar-sinister across a sable shield.

The "turf accountants" are bracing themselves for the *pièce-de-résistance* of the day. "It is just picking money up to back Rock Sand!" the knowing people tell you; but there is a royal entry. An impression seems to have taken hold of our section of the betting public that the King, who they tell us is present away in yonder lofty stand or in the paddock, is destined to win his third Derby stakes. The wish is father to the thought, and before such sentiment the skill and reputation of trainers is nothing in the minds of the casual race-goer. Loyalty is responsible for many a sovereign and half-sovereign bet during the last quarter of an hour, and you hear men saying that they would not mind how much they lost if they could hope to see another royal win.

The course is now clear and all is expectancy

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for the parade of the Derby field. It is a small field, for only seven names are on the card. We in our cheap enclosure have a mild excitement while the *élite* are thronging the paddock. For reasons known only to themselves and the stewards of the meeting, the police have their receiving-station almost underneath the grand stand. Anyway the transgressors of turf etiquette in the matter of ready-money transactions are paraded, when the police find it expedient to furnish them with a haven, all along the front of the cheaper enclosures. One such miserable is now dragged past us. Even the sanctity of the cleared course cannot prevent the more enthusiastic of his creditors from bearing him company. He is a sorry—almost indecent—sight and even now is not secure, though in the custody of four stalwart pillars of the law. Unmoved by his cut and bleeding face, or the scanty remnant of raiment left him, an angry claimant hurls himself upon him and, before his escort can prevent the blow, hits him heavily with both fists at once. So much for the spirit of commerce militant!

On the far side a file of policemen move out on to the course. It is preliminary to the parade of the Derby horses. Here they come—one, two, three, four, five, six tall, lean thoroughbreds, their long tails swinging in unison as they pick their graceful way with cat-like steps across the springy turf. The favourite is in front and, as the eager gaze of hundreds centres upon him,

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they find that reassurance which sends many of them back to the bookmaker. Hullo! what is that?—Rock Sand is only playful; he kicks up, and for the moment Maher, from the absurd angle of his knees, seems likely to disappear over the favourite's head. Yet beautifully as Blackwell has turned Rock Sand out, there are many who cannot, at the eleventh hour, resist the temptation to invest a mite upon M. Blanc's nomination. Vinicius, in spite of his having run poorly at Chantilly on the preceding Sunday and the unsettling possibilities of the incidental sea trip, looks as bright as bay ever looked. A fine, big striding colt and owned by a sporting foreigner. Surely he is worth a sovereign for a place!

They have turned, and are cantering past the grand stand: then they turn again, the crowd divides, and they disappear into it on their way to the post. In the meantime the steady hum of renewed business spreads over the Derby crowd. A ten minutes' wait, and the white signal flag of the starter gleams out above the heads of the hundreds who have collected to see the start.

A great silence seems to pervade the course, broken, it is true, by the comment of the bookmakers. But much of the noise and bustle is stilled—it is a silence by comparison. Thousands of eyes are fixed on that little square of fluttering white on the far side of the hill. Will it never fall! Who is the culprit?—Aceful, the unsatis-

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factory American, who never appeared in the parade! Then the white disappears and, before the bell tolls out, the murmur swells up, "They're off!" They disappear behind the brow of the hill, with its skyline of booths and luncheon canvas, and the crowd which had witnessed the start comes tumbling back, in the hope that it may see something of the finish. The murmur dies away and it is in comparative silence again that every eye is strained to the point where they will appear on the skyline. A few seconds of suspense. "Here they come!" The murmur again, as a bunch of extended horses sweeps into sight. They all seem to be racing abreast. The proverbial sheet would have covered them. Then those with field-glasses pick out the colours; a horse has been driven into the van. "Mead's in front!" A tremor goes through the hearers. The superstitious are right, then—we are going to have a repetition of the scenes which marked the Royal win with Persimmon and Diamond Jubilee! But those who have a better judgment allay the popular excitement. "Rock Sand is going strong." They are at the five furlongs now, and the colours of the favourite have drawn up to those of the King. In a moment they will disappear, to reappear round Tattenham Corner. Even though we feel that the race is already won, the excitement is breathless. "Ten to one, bar one!" comes a raucous cry behind us. One "Turf Accountant" at least is satisfied that the favourite wins. "Here they come."

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The leaders sweep into the straight. As they gallop against that dense background of crowd they look small and insignificant. The favourite is inside and—leading. The murmur swells to a roar. They have reached the distance! What a picture!—what a thunder of applause! They are passing us now. The favourite hugs the rails. Maher wins sitting still. What is this? The great bay is going through them. The French horse is making its effort. Vinicius! Vinicius wins! The bay indeed has come with a wet sail: he has left Mead, Rabelais, and Flotsam behind; but Maher never moves, and amid a vast tumult of human shouting the numbers go up.

The favourite has won the Derby.[1]

[1] The Derby Stakes, 1903—Rock Sand, 1; Vinicius, 2; Flotsam, 3.

THE END.

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